Bengaluru Tuesday, March 3, 2026 Pages 16 Vol 79 No 62 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Excise case: CBI moves HC against Kejriwal's discharge

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Oil surges, war widens beyond Gulf

NO END IN SIGHT: Oil, gas facilities shut; gold jumps; Trump says 'big wave' yet to come

DUBAI/NEW DELHI, REUTERS

Saudi Arabia shut its biggest domestic oil refinery on Monday after a drone attack as Israeli and US strikes and Iranian retaliation triggered precautionary shutdowns of oil and gas facilities across West Asia, including in Iraq and Israel.

Oil prices surged 13% to above $82 a barrel, the highest since January 2025, as the conflict ground shipping to a near halt in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil supply flows.

Energy analysts termed the attack on Saudi Aramco's Ras Tanura refinery as a "significant escalation".

Amid the conflict in the oil-rich Gulf, India said it will take all necessary steps to ensure the availability of major petroleum products at affordable rates.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri reviewed the supply situation for crude oil, LPG, and other petroleum products with senior officials from the ministry and public sector companies.

As the military conflict looked set to last for weeks, global shares slid and precious metal prices skyrocketed. Silver surged to Rs 3 lakh per kilogram in New Delhi, while gold came close to Rs 1.73 lakh per 10 grams as investors flocked to safe-haven assets.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump warned Tehran that the "big wave" is yet to come in the war with Iran. "We haven't even started hitting them hard. The big wave hasn't even happened. The big one is coming soon," he told *CNN*.

He further said Iran operations are likely to last 4 to 5 weeks but that he's prepared "to go far longer than that."

Earlier in the day, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth declined to give a timeline for the war.

A major new front in the war opened on Monday when Iran's ally in Lebanon, Hezbollah, launched missiles and drones toward Israel.

▸ Iran, Page 3B

Smoke plumes billow following Israeli bombardment on Beirut, Lebanon. The war launched by the US and Israel against Iran spread further on Monday with Hezbollah entering the fray. AFP

Stocks slump over war

Indian stock market's key indices slumped with Sensex losing 1,048 points on Monday, leading to over Rs 6.5 lakh crore erosion in investors' wealth. The benchmark Sensex of the BSE slumped 1.29% to 80,238.85. Nifty 50 of the NSE closed 1.24% down at 24,865.70.
Details on Page 11

AI Express ops, IndiGo relief flights start today

NEW DELHI/DUBAI, DHNS & AGENCIES

Air travel to West Asia continued to be impacted with Indian airlines on Monday cancelling 357 services even as Air India announced that its operations to and from Muscat, including services from Mangaluru will resume on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, IndiGo plans to operate 10 special relief flights from Jeddah to various Indian cities on Tuesday to bring back stranded passengers.

In Dubai, the United Arab Emirates said it will resume "limited" flights at Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports on Monday.

Long-haul carriers Etihad Airways and Emirates, based in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and budget carrier FlyDubai, said they would operate select flights from the country

The Ministry of Civil Aviation in Delhi said in a statement that it was continuously monitoring the situation in West Asia, which remained tense following military action by US-Israel against Iran.

"Due to the ongoing situation, 357 flights planned for operation today were cancelled," it said on 'X'. Altogether, around 760 services were cancelled due to airspace restrictions that set in on Saturday following the military escalation in the region.

Through the Passenger Assistance Control Room (PACR), it said a total of 559 grievances have been addressed during this period.

▸ Flights, Page 3B

I don't have the yips with respect to boots on the ground. Every president says, 'There will be no boots on the ground.' I don't say it. I say 'probably don't need them,' (or) 'if they were necessary'

DONALD TRUMP US President

INDIA'S CRUDE/GAS imports from West Asia via Strait of Hormuz

- 50% total crude imports come via Strait
- 2.5-2.7 million barrels per day
- Main West Asian sources Iraq, Saudi, the UAE, Kuwait
- Nearly 60% of LNG imports
- 100% of LPG imports

Monday's developments

- At least 555 people killed in Iran so far
- More than 130 Iran cities have come under attack so far
- Iranian-backed Hezbollah joins fighting
- US and Israel continue to pound Iran
- US Embassy compound hit in Kuwait
- Kuwait air defence "mistakenly shoots down" three American F-15 jets
- Fourth US soldier dies in conflict
- Drone attack on British base in Cyprus
- 11 death toll in Israel so far
- 31 deaths in Lebanon

14 hurt in J&K protests P.8 | The risks and rewards of India's Israel tilt P.6 | CM seeks coordination system to bring back Indians P.3 | Indian refiners may embrace Russian oil again P.11

- Pact between Canada's Cameco and India's Department of Atomic Energy would play critical role in New Delhi's efforts to build small modular reactors
- Modi says India and Canada to jointly host renewable energy summit; calls for enhanced co-operation in AI, supercomputing, and semiconductors
- India and Canada finalise the terms of reference of a free trade deal

Canada, India seal Rs 17k-cr pact for uranium supply

Aim to expand bilateral trade to Rs 4.65 lakh crore by 2030

Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Right) with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney in New Delhi on Monday. REUTERS

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Resetting relations with New Delhi that remained strained due to diplomatic tensions over the killing of a Sikh separatist on Canadian soil in 2023, Canada on Monday committed to a Rs 17,403 crore (2.6 billion Canadian dollars or $1.9 billion) agreement pledging an expansion in uranium shipments to India for nuclear power generation.

The commercial agreement between Canada's Cameco and India's Department of Atomic Energy for the long-term supply of uranium would play a critical role in New Delhi's efforts to build small modular reactors, compatible with the new civil nuclear energy framework passed by Parliament last year.

"In civil nuclear energy, we have reached a landmark deal for long-term uranium supply. We will also work together on small modular reactors and advanced reactors," Prime Minister Narendra Modi told reporters after meeting the visiting Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at Hyderabad House in Delhi on Monday.

Modi and Carney expressed confidence on expanding bilateral trade to Rs 4.65 lakh crore by 2030.

After assuming office, this is Carney's first official visit to India. He arrived in Mumbai last week on an invitation extended by Modi.

Calling the two countries "natural partners", Modi announced India and Canada would jointly host a renewable energy summit, calling for enhanced co-operation in AI, supercomputing, and semiconductors.

Carney hailed the progress in mending the ties between New Delhi and Ottawa, adding that the two countries are embarking on a strategic energy partnership.

▸ Canada, Page 3B

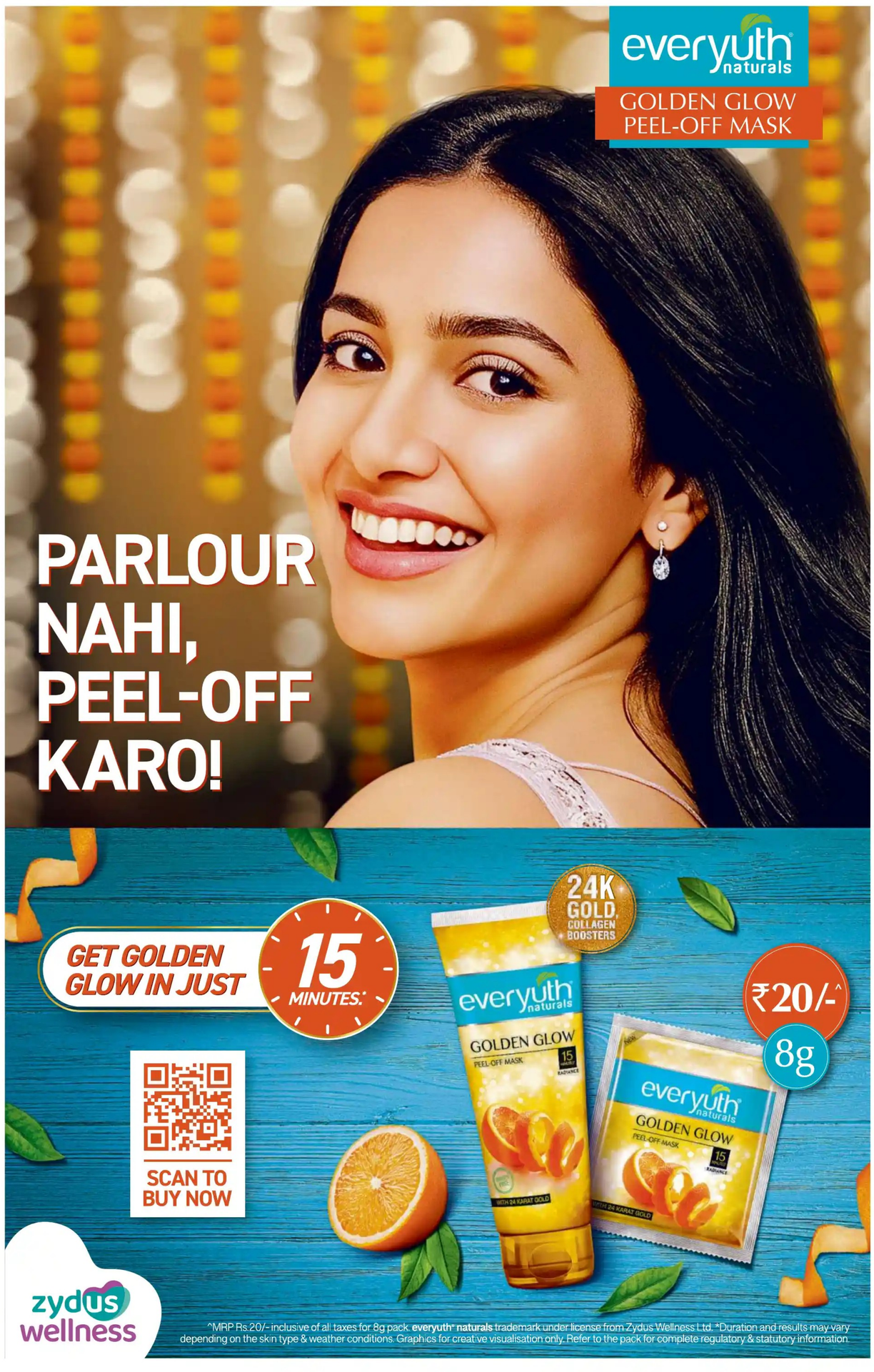
EPFO retains interest rate at 8.25%

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Monday fixed the interest on PF deposits for 2025-26 at 8.25%, retaining the rate for the second consecutive year.

The interest rate would be officially notified by the Ministry of Finance, following which EPFO would credit it into the subscribers' account. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Central Board of Trustees of the EPFO chaired by Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya here.

Despite global uncertainties, an official statement said, the EPFO has maintained strong financial discipline.

Details on Page 5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Birthday Remembrance

Sri B.S.Narayan

03rd March

You will live forever in our hearts
Your ideals are always there as
beacons of inspiration

Fondly Remembered by :

Dr.B. S. Ragini Narayan

Donor Trustee & Chairperson, BMS Educational Trust
Life Trustee, BMS Hospital Trust

Quickly

Panel studying 'backward' criteria

In the run-up to submitting the much-anticipated Social & Educational Survey report, the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes is discussing the criteria and weightage to assess the backwardness of communities. The weightage is said to be crucial as it determines the yardstick for determining backwardness.
Details on Page 4

Industrial output growth slips to 4.8%

India's industrial production growth declined to 4.8% in January, from a robust 8% expansion recorded in the previous month, as manufacturing activities decelerated following the ramp-up for the festive season, official data showed on Monday. The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation revised upward December industrial output growth data to 8%.
Details on Page 11

Pak destroys Afghan ammo depot

Pakistan's offensive against the Afghan Taliban was going on as its security forces destroyed an ammunition depot, state media reported on Monday. Pakistan launched 'Operation Ghazab lil Haq' last week.
Details on Page 10

Traffic curbs on Banaswadi Main Road for 90 days

BENGALURU, DHNS: Commuters navigating North Bengaluru should brace for delays as the corporation begins reconstructing a water channel bridge on Banaswadi Main Road. Starting March 3, all vehicular movement near the Fire Station will be prohibited for 90 days to facilitate the civil work.

According to the Banaswadi Traffic Police, the stretch between Vemana Circle and Uttam Sagar Junction is now restricted. To mitigate congestion, the existing one-way stretch near the Fire Station has been converted into a temporary two-way road.

Alternative routes and parking

Vehicles heading from Vemana Circle must turn right at the Fire Station, continue on the temporary two-way stretch, and take a left at 2nd Cross to reach Uttam Sagar Junction.

Parking is strictly prohibited on Banaswadi Main Road between Vemana Circle and Uttam Sagar Junction to ensure smooth traffic flow.

Unidentified man found dead on railway tracks, probe on

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Yeshwantpur Railway Police have initiated an investigation after the unidentified body of a man was discovered on the railway tracks on Monday, officials said.

According to officials, the Railway Police were alerted to the mangled body at 8.30 am. The body was found at KM No. 17/600–900 near the Tarabanahalli railway gate, located between Chikkabanavara and Gollahalli railway stations.

Officials arrived at the spot, and a prima facie probe revealed that the body was that of a male. The body was shifted for further legal proceedings, including autopsy.

An unnatural death report (UDR) has been registered and an investigation is underway. "We are yet to identify the body. The reason for the death is also being probed and remains unclear at the moment," a senior Railway Police officer said.

George reviews key civic works in Sarvagnanagar

BENGALURU, DHNS: Energy Minister K J George on Monday chaired a review meeting with the Bengaluru North City Corporation to assess the progress of major development works under way in the Sarvagnanagar Assembly constituency. He directed officials to expedite the completion of projects, including the rejuvenation of Kacharakanahalli Lake and the KPTCL Theme Park.

The meeting was held at Vidhana Soudha and was attended by senior officials, including Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar.

George reviewed the rejuvenation works at Kacharakanahalli Lake, where the corporation has taken up works such as desilting, landscaping and pathway development. The minister also assessed progress at the KPTCL Theme Park, Banaswadi Auditorium, garbage transfer station at HBR Layout, and the sports complex at Jeevanhalli.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	32.0°C
Minimum	20.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	45%
Sunset (Mar 3)	6:29 pm
Sunrise (Mar 4)	6:35 am
Moonrise	5:36 am
Moonset	5:37 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

In a first, BSWML earns credits for co-processing plastic waste

Civic agency targets to make Rs 100 crore per annum

BENGALURU, DHNS

For the first time, the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) has earned Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) credits worth Rs 1.80 crore for co-processing low-value plastic waste of about 18,625 metric tonnes. The BSWML – which collects about 520 tonnes of plastic waste on a daily basis – hopes to increase the revenue from EPR credits by doubling the volume of plastic waste proceccessed.

Addressing a press meet here on Monday, Karigowda, Chief Executive Officer of the BSWML, said the city generates an average of 6,000 metric tonnes of solid waste every day, and the agency has set a target of increasing refuse-derived fuel (RDF) collection to 1,000 metric tonnes per day.

"There is an improvement in the segregation of waste at source. As a result, the volume of plastic waste being diverted from landfills has reduced," he said.

"From December 15, 2025, to February 26, 2026, around 18,625 metric tonnes of RDF was transported to Dalmia Cement units for co-processing under a tender agreement. Under the EPR framework, cement companies provide EPR credits to BSWML for processing RDF waste. These credits are then sold to Producers, Importers and Brand Owners (PIBOs) in accordance with the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2024," Karigowda said.

The BSWML, he said, will enroll PIBOs to encash the EPR credits. Officials said one EPR credit is valued at Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000. "We spend Rs 1,000 for the transportation of plastic to the cement factories and the BSWML stands to earn Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 for every EPR credit," the officer said.

In 2011, the Centre had introduced EPR policy with an aim to make producers responsible for the scientific collection, recycling and disposal of their products after sale and consumption. In the past, non-profit organisations and solid waste management experts played a bigger role in encashing the EPR credits by bridging the gap by co-processing the plastic in Bengaluru. The civic body believes it can earn up to Rs 100 crore per annum through EPR credits.

The automatic waste segregation station of the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited at Chamarajpet in Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

Garbage complaints

Citizens facing garbage-related issues within the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) can file complaints via the Sahaaya 2.0 application, the helpline number 1533, or the WhatsApp chatbot at 94481 97197. Officials said the complaints are monitored through the Integrated Command and Control Centre and forwarded to the concerned officials for prompt resolution.

Brand ambassadors

As part of the Swachh Survekshan campaign, the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) has appointed brand ambassadors to create public awareness on cleanliness. They are: Padma Shri awardee Manjamma Jogati, film actor Aniruddha Jatkar, and social worker Arun Pai.

A special programme has been scheduled in Town Hall on March 9 to formally launch the initiative. Through these ambassadors, extensive public outreach campaigns will be conducted across the city as BSWML hopes to perform better in the country-wide cleanliness campaign.

Small-time actress among 3 held for live-in partner's murder

BENGALURU, DHNS

A small-time actress was among three people arrested by the Bagalagunte police for the murder of her live-in partner, officials said on Monday.

The arrested are Bindu, Vinay, a truck driver, and Dhanush Gowda, who was working in a restaurant.

Bindu told the police that she is an LLB graduate and a small-time actress who starred in short films, and had minor roles in some Kannada movies. The claim is being verified, the police said.

Investigations revealed that Bindu was in a live-in relationship with the deceased Mohan Rao, 45, a small-time financier and pigmy collector. Rao had left his wife long time ago, and Bindu was also living separately from her husband.

Both decided to live together at a rented house in Manjunatha Nagar around three months ago, claiming they were a couple.

On February 28, a foul smell began emanating from the house. The landlord alerted the police, who found Rao's decomposing body inside the house. A case was registered, and an investigation was initiated.

Probe revealed that even as she lived with Rao, Bindu became close with Vinay and decided to marry him. Rao, however, objected to this and wanted to be with Bindu. Thinking that Rao would be an obstacle, the two decided to eliminate him, and Bindu brought in Gowda to help them.

On February 18, all four had liquor in the house. The suspects stabbed an inebriated Rao and used plastic cover to suffocate him. They fled the spot then.

Based on a technical investigation and location analysis, the police arrested the three suspects. Further investigation is underway, the police said.

Marathon for girls' education on March 8

BENGALURU, DHNS: A student-led marathon and sports fundraiser, Kanyathon 2026, dedicated to supporting the education of women and girls from red-light areas, Adivasi and economically disadvantaged communities across the country, will be held on March 8 from 5 am onwards at Infosys Leisure Ground, Electronics City.

For more details, call 9004724580.

FOR HIKE IN HONORARIUM

Anganwadi workers and assistants stage a protest demanding a hike in their honorarium, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday. DH PHOTO

Senior executive of pvt hospital booked on sexual assault charge

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Siddapura police have registered a criminal case against a senior executive of a private hospital in the city after a woman co-worker alleged that he sexually assaulted and exploited her.

The suspect named in the FIR is Trivikrama Rao, top police sources confirmed to *DH*. He is the executive director of the hospital located near Jayanagar in south Bengaluru.

"The FIR was registered based on a complaint by the woman three days ago. The woman works in the same hospital but the alleged offence occurred in a different location. It is alleged that she was taken there on the guise of meetings and professional discussions before being sexually assaulted. In order to protect her identity, we are not divulging further details about the nature of her work, etc.," a senior police officer told *DH*.

The sources confirmed that rape charge has been invoked against the suspect, based on the complaint. "The suspect is yet to be arrested and efforts are underway to trace him," a police investigators said.

Invites to be published should be sent to:
incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.
Please note that hard copieswill not be accepted.

FOOT CARE

Endocrinology Institute to begin HBOT therapy for diabetic foot

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

With nearly 25,000 patients seeking care annually for diabetic foot and podiatry issues, the Karnataka Endocrinology Institute and Research (KEIR) will become the first government facility in the state to introduce Hyperbaric Therapy (HBT) exclusively for diabetic foot.

The institution which deals exclusively with diabetic patients sees up to 120 patients everyday arriving with a diabetic foot. The KIER is one of the first institutions to have a dedicated podiatry department.

"India is already the diabetic capital of the world. It is obvious that we will have more diabetic related problems and diabetic foot is the next big health challenge," Dr Belehalli Pavan, Head of Department of Podiatry said.

While people suffering with one diabetic foot was a common occurrence in the past few years, people coming in with both feet compromised has become a regular occurrence now.

While people suffering with one diabetic foot was a common occurrence in the past few years, people coming in with both feet compromised has become a regular occurrence at the KIER.

"Podiatry is the department that should ideally deal with diabetic foot but when something happens to the feet, the patients immediately visit orthopaedics. Orthopaedics should immediately refer to us but the lack of awareness in patients and medical staff leads to amputation of limbs many times," said the doctor.

The institution has also set up digital foot scanners in Chikkaballapur Primary Health Center to help people from other districts access the treatment from their places instead of travelling to Bengaluru.

"We are in touch with the health department to allow us set it up in PHCs and other government health care to help people get good treatment," he said.

The treatment

Victoria Hospital in 2022 became the first government hospital to set up a five-person Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy unit to treat non-healing wounds such as burns.

The KIER will be introducing two HBOT units to help wounds heal faster. "Wounds do not heal fast for diabetic patients which will later lead to infections and further amputation. We have set up therapy chambers to fasten recovery," said Dr Belehalli Pavan.

Each session will be of 70 minutes and the chamber will have twice the atmospheric pressure than normal with pure oxygen inside the chamber. Along with a patient an attender will also be allowed inside the chamber. Light, water and facilities for fire emergencies are in place.

The machine was procured at Rs one crore from CSR fund. The price for therapy in other therapy centers starts from Rs 3,000 and KIER will be providing it at less than half the fee charged by the private hospitals.

'Graft' at Kidwai: Lokayukta seeks action taken report

Ombudsman had detected deficiencies during visit

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka Lokayukta officials on Monday said that the anti-corruption ombudsman was probing the alleged irregularities at the Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology in Bengaluru.

Lokayukta Justice B S Patil ordered registration of a suo motu case following an anonymous complaint about "irregularities, corruption and management failures" at the hospital.

Believing that notices or summons would lead to hiding of facts, the Lokayukta instead issued search warrants and Justice Patil, too, physically visited the hospital premises. During his visit, several deficiencies were discovered, and a hearing was scheduled on February 25 at the Lokayukta office. Dr Naveen, Director; Harish, Financial Advisor and Venkateshappa, Administrative Officer of the hospital, attended the hearing.

"Regarding the unavailability of protein and Trantuzumab drugs in the hospital, the director stated that correspondence had been made with the executive director of the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust to supply these medicines, and the matter is currently under consideration," as per a statement.

The Lokayukta ordered that not just these two drugs, but all necessary medicines must be supplied to the hospital to benefit poor patients.

Lokayukta also directed that steps be taken to relax certain restrictions in government schemes like Ayushman Bharat and Arogya Karnataka to facilitate health services for poor patients. The Principal Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Services was asked to submit a report on this.

During his visit last year, Lokayukta noticed a shortage of doctors in the Medical Oncology department. When questioned, the director explained that the government had fixed a remuneration of Rs 1.20 lakh per month for doctors. "There is a shortage since super-specialty doctors are not coming forward to work for this remuneration. Additionally, some serving doctors have submitted resignations and are requesting that they be accepted," the statement said.

Lokayukta noted that the government should immediately address this by providing various incentives to attract and motivate doctors to serve. He also suggested encouraging retired professors to serve at the institution.

"Furthermore, regarding the lack of cleanliness in dormitories, wards, etc. observed during the September 26, 2025 visit, the director stated that several improvement measures had been taken, resulting in 80% improvement in cleanliness. The Lokayukta remarked that achieving only 80% is not sufficient and instructed that 100% progress be achieved on cleanliness," the statement said.

The Lokayukta said a report on the actions taken must be submitted at the next hearing on April 24, 2026.

Lokayukta also directed that steps be taken to relax certain restrictions in government schemes like Ayushman Bharat and Arogya Karnataka to facilitate health services for poor patients. DH FILE PHOTO

NCBS holds cleanliness drive

BENGALURU, DHNS: The National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), a part of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bengaluru, conducted a series of awareness and cleanliness activities as part of the Swachhata Pakhwada (Cleanliness Fortnight) campaign.

The initiative began with a training session on office ethics and hygiene for employees, aimed at promoting a clean and responsible workplace environment.

A signature campaign was also organised to spread awareness about cleanliness and civic responsibility among staff and the community.

As part of the outreach activities, a session on waste management was held, along with an exhibition on 'waste to wealth', highlighting sustainable practices and innovative recycling methods.

A sapling plantation drive was conducted at Thindlu Government Higher Primary School.

A drawing competition on the Swachhata Pakhwada theme was organised for government school children, followed by a school cleaning drive and additional sapling plantation. The occasion was also marked by the cleaning of a primary health centre and Doddabommasandra Lake.

Hygiene checks conducted at meat shops in Yelahanka

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) conducted an inspection of poultry and meat shops in Yelahanka to check for health, hygiene and licence compliance.

Officials visited 10 such shops and checked the validity of trade licences, health and hygiene standards, cold storage facilities, methods of meat storage and display, waste disposal systems, and health and safety measures for staff.

Some shops were also issued notices for failing to adhere to norms. "During the inspection, it was observed that some shops had not renewed their licences, lacked proper cleanliness, and were not fully complying with prescribed health standards. Necessary instructions were issued to shop owners, and notices have been served to those operating without proper documentation and in violation of regulations," a statement from the corporation said.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Unveiling of the nameplate of the road named after Dr Narahalli Balasubrahmanya: S T Somashekar and M Prakasamruthi to attend; Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Yeshwanthpur Assembly Constituency; Kalyana Gruha Nirmaan Sahakari Sangha Layout, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar; 10.30 am.

CULTURAL

Golden Jubilee valedictory: Purushottam Bilimale, H S Raghavendra Rao to attend; Honorary Recipient: Anil Joseph Pinto; Kannada Sangha of Christ Deemed to be University, Hosur Road; 3 pm.

Kamannana Festival: Kamanna Gudi Seva Samiti Trust, Aralepet; 6.30 pm.

West Asia airspace closure hits patients seeking treatment in B'luru hospitals

They reschedule or suggest online consultation

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The closure of key West Asia airspace amid the escalating tension has hit critical patients seeking treatment in hospitals in India.

Many tertiary care hospitals in Bengaluru, that routinely receive referrals from Gulf countries, say surgical interventions, patients scheduled for transplant procedures, and follow-up treatments are facing some delay. However, some hospitals are offering online consultations.

The hospitals in the city have the highest number of patients coming in from Oman, followed by Saudi Arabia, Dubai and other countries.

Speaking to *DH*, Dr Deepshika Raj, Group GM - International Healthcare Services, Sparsh Hospital, said, "Oman is where we get the maximum number of patients, followed by other countries. Patients mainly come here for Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) and cancer and cancer-related treatments."

"It is still too soon for us to decide whether delaying the procedures scheduled is ideal; we will continue to monitor the situation," she added.

The international wing Aster CMI, Hebbal, said, "We regularly receive patients from Iran, UAE for consultations and treatment. Currently, however, all our international patients have returned to their home countries. We continue to offer online consultations for international patients. If, after the online assessment, the doctor determines that an in-person visit is medically necessary, we will advise the patient accordingly."

The hospitals in the city have the highest number of patients coming in from Oman, followed by Saudi Arabia, Dubai and other countries.

"We regularly receive international patients for treatment related to Paediatrics, Cardiology, Urology, Gynaecology, and Gastroenterology," they added.

A senior medical practitioner with Narayana Health City in Bommasandra said, "There are temporary disruptions or delays in the patient's planned visits, particularly if they were scheduled for time-sensitive or advanced procedures. However, our teams remain in close coordination with patients and facilitators to reschedule consultations and treatments as required, ensuring continuity of care wherever possible. "

"Historically, patients from countries such as Iraq, Yemen, and the UAE have primarily sought advanced cardiac care with us, while those from Oman, and Iraq have travelled for specialised treatments, including BMT and oncology services," the hospital authorities said.

Follow advisories issued by local authorities, govt tells stranded Kannadigas

BENGALURU, DHNS: A total of 109 Kannadigas have been left stranded in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain owing to the conflict in the West Asia, the government on Monday.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byregowda confirmed that the 109 Kannadigas – 100 of whom are stuck in UAE and nine in Bahrain – had reached out to the government.

"We have learnt that one Kannadiga has sustained a minor injury. We request Kannadigas in those countries to follow necessary protocols, besides adhering to advisories issued by local authorities and Indian Embassies," he said.

However, Byregowda said that Kannadigas who were having trouble returning home from European countries need not worry. "There are alternative routes through which they can fly home. For instance, they can return via Singapore," he said.

The State Emergency Operations Centre had been activated, along with Emergency Operation Centres in each district, said the minister, adding that these would function round the clock to extend assistance to those in distress.

Most people reaching out to the government were asking for special flights to be arranged to return home. "We have relayed their pleas to the union government. But since flights cannot be operated in the region at present, we have assured them that steps will be taken for their safe return once the situation returns to normal. It may take between 4 and 10 days," the minister said.

The government has been besieged with callers stuck at different airports in countries they have no visas for. "In such a scenario, people can contact the concerned embassy and secure local visa. We will make arrangements for their accommodation once they exit the airport. We have urged the Centre to foot the bill for their expenses, which will be reimbursed by the state later," he said.

Evacuation difficult until war ends: Kumaraswamy

MYSURU, DHNS: Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H D Kumaraswamy on Monday said that the evacuation of Indian nationals from conflict-ridden Gulf countries would remain a significant challenge until hostilities cease and the airspace is reopened.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru city, Kumaraswamy addressed the anxiety of the families, whose relatives are currently stranded, following the recent military escalations in the region. "It is difficult to bring everyone back until the war stops completely. The suspension of flight operations is the primary hurdle. Once the flights resume, we can ensure that everyone returns home safely and quickly," he assured.

Support from diaspora

The Union minister lauded the efforts of the Kannadiga community in the West Asia. "Kannadigas working in Dubai have proactively stepped up to help their compatriots. I am also in touch with many individuals there, who are coordinating ground-level assistance," Kumaraswamy said.

He emphasised that the safety of every Indian national is the top priority of the Union government. "The Centre is committed to the protection of all citizens. The State government is also in constant dialogue with the Central authorities to manage the crisis effectively," he added.

72 flights cancelled; many a plan grounded

144 cancellations at KIA on March 1, 2

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

As many as 72 flights were cancelled at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on Monday, due to airspace restrictions in West Asia.

With 39 arrivals and 33 departures cancelled, flights to Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dubai and Doha were majorly impacted, an airport representative said.

The uncertainty in the Gulf region has left several people stranded at the airport and also impacted employment opportunities of many.

Between March 1 and 2, at least 122 flights have been cancelled at KIA. These not only include flights to West Asian destinations, but also connecting flights to various European cities.

Ayaz (name changed), a 40-year-old resident of JC Nagar, was scheduled to start his new job at a logistics firm in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, this week.

"I was set to fly out on Monday, but now that flights are cancelled, the company has postponed my joining date indefinitely. I'm praying I don't lose this job," he told *DH*.

A recent MBA, scheduled to join a marketing firm in Dubai, also shared a similar experience.

For Pradeep, who works in the sales sector in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, an extended vacation comes with a loss of pay.

"I moved to Saudi Arabia last year, and I came back home to Bengaluru two weeks ago for vacation. I'm scheduled to return this week, but now it's looking unlikely. If I don't get back, my daily wages will be cut as my vacation days are over. They'll give a grace period of only two-three days," he elaborated.

To assist passengers and provide on-ground support, KIA has set up a helpdesk at the kerbside of Terminal 2.

To assist stranded passengers, Bangalore International Airport Limited, the airport operator, has set up chairs, drinking water, charging stations and medical assistance at the helpdesk. Airport sources confirmed that Emirates will operate A388 on Tuesday early morning.

The departure is restricted for UAE nationals and resident permit holders.

No contact with families leaves Iranians in Bengaluru anxious

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Amidst the ongoing US and Israel-coordinated military assault on Iran, Iranians living in Bengaluru struggle to reach out to their families back home.

Tima, who is currently pursuing her Master's in Psychology, hasn't been able to contact her parents and sister residing in Babol, northern Iran, for the past two days.

"There's a complete internet blackout there. They don't have any cell reception. I've been anxious for the past two days as I haven't been able to speak to either my parents or my extended family. But I'm keeping calm because this isn't a new situation for us; we've witnessed several such blackouts under the current regime," she shared. Her family had been trying to visit India for the past two months, but remained unsuccessful.

A restaurant owner who was set to visit his family in Tehran in the first week of February was forced to postpone his trip due to flight cancellations. "It was my mother's first death anniversary, but the regime had cancelled flights," he said. With family in Tehran, Shiraz, Bandar Abbas, Arak, Kermanshah, Mamasani, Ahvaz and Isfahan, his contact with them has been sporadic in nature.

"I'm able to connect with some people at times. International calls are limited due to tapping. Some have satellite phones and Starlink facilities secretly," he said, adding that he only trusted his family and friends back home for authentic news.

"Different media channels are reposting different things. It has become difficult to decipher what is real and what's propaganda," said Reza, a medical student, who will be moving to Iran later this year.

Most Iranians in the city remained wary of speaking up about the current situation. "At some point, we need to return to Iran, and we are aware of the fact that our phones will be tapped for a background check. We want to protect ourselves from that trouble and more importantly, we want to make sure our actions don't impact our families," he added.

While the community remains divided about the US intervention, with some mourning the death of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and fearing the impact of US involvement, others celebrated it in hopes of a more 'liberal' Iran. Overall, Iranians in the city hoped for a democratic Iran, moving away from the previous Shah and Islamic regimes.

Dubai Kannada Sangha extends help to those from state

BALLARI, DHNS

Over 100 Kannadigas are stranded in the West Asia amid Iran's retaliatory attacks on the US bases across the Gulf following the US-Israel joint strikes. The war-torn region has thrown the travel plan of the Indians, mostly tourists, into turmoil.

According to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, over 100 Kannadigas are stuck in the UAE cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi and Bahrain. Among those stranded in Dubai are 32 people from Ballari, including Ballari City Congress MLA Nara Bharat Reddy and five of his family members. As many as 15 members of Yalpi Pampanagouda, who went to Dubai on a package tour, also stuck in Dubai.

"Pampanagouda's family had left for the UAE on February 23. They were supposed to return via Sharjah on February 28. They returned to Dubai after the flights were grounded due to the ongoing war. With no government help forthcoming, they were left to fend for themselves.

Thankfully, the members of Kannada Sangha in the UAE, MLA B Nagendra's friends in Dubai, 'Drone' Prathap and others came to their rescue. All 32 members from Ballari have been moved to 'Exclusive-My Home in Dubai' a service apartment on the outskirts of Dubai. The Kannada Sangha has made arrangements for food and water, and health check-ups for the elderly," Diwakargouda, son of Pampanagouda told *DH*. The service apartment where people from Ballari are staying is a residential area, but sounds of explosions are being heard every now and then, he said.

We are safe: Congress MLA

MLA Bharath Reddy has released a video from Dubai stating that he, his family and the other tourists from Ballari are safe.

"My family and I are safe, along with the others who had come from Ballari, are safe. I have sent my office staff to help those stranded in Dubai.

A list of the tourists, business travellers and others from the state stranded in Dubai has been sent to the Embassy of India in the UAE, through the state government. We will fly back once the flight service resumed," Reddy said in the purported video.

"Many from state, including legislators, business travellers and tourists, are stuck in the war-ravaged Iran, Dubai, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The state government has urged the Centre to take necessary measures to bring back the stranded. A special delegation under Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar is in constant touch with the embassies and the governments of the Gulf nations.

G PARAMESHWARA
HOME MINISTER

CM seeks national coordination system to bring back Indians

BENGALURU, DHNS: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take immediate measures to safeguard Kannadigas and other Indian nationals affected by geopolitical tensions in West Asia that have disrupted international flight operations.

In a letter dated March 2, the CM said recent airspace restrictions by several countries had led to large-scale disruptions, leaving many Indians stranded in major transit hubs, particularly Dubai.

Highlighting growing distress among families in Karnataka, Siddaramaiah said the state government had sought urgent coordination from the ministry of external affairs (MEA) for the safety of Kannadigas and exploring possible measures to bring them back.

He said the ministry of civil aviation had been requested to work with airlines to facilitate flexible rescheduling, waiver of penalties and interim assistance for stranded passengers.

The chief minister has urged the Centre to strengthen diplomatic outreach through Indian missions in affected regions and to prepare a framework for priority evacuation or special flights if the situation worsens.

He sought a dedicated national coordination mechanism by establishing an inter-ministerial task force to streamline communication between MEA, ministry of civil aviation, state governments and airline operators.

Siddaramaiah proposed the creation of a centralised digital registration and information system to track stranded passengers and provide real-time advisories to their families.

The Karnataka government has activated the state emergency operations centre and district-level control rooms to function round-the-clock and designated senior nodal officers to coordinate with central authorities.

Earlier in the day, the CM took to social media to assure Kannadigas stranded in the conflict region of the state government's commitment to ensure their safety and safe return.

He urged them to remain calm and strictly and to follow advisories issued by local authorities and Indian embassies and to register with the embassy/consulate concerned, through the helpline numbers shared by the Indian government.

Dry fruits may get dearer soon as Iran conflict rages on

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

The impact of the ongoing conflict in West Asia is likely to affect the dry fruit market in Bengaluru in the coming weeks, say local traders.

From figs to almonds, a large chunk of the dry fruits imported into the country comes from Iran. Iran's Mazafati dates remain the most popular in Bengaluru, particularly during the month of Ramzan.

"These are the most common dates and are sold at Rs 300 per kg. As they are budget-friendly, they are usually purchased in large quantities to distribute during Ramzan," said Mohammed Idrees Choudhury, general secretary, Russell Market Fruits and Dry Fruits Traders' Association.

Ramzan stocks

Ahead of Ramzan, a majority of the traders in the city had stocked up on dry fruits.

"Since sales are high during Ramzan, we stocked up well in advance for the festive season. So, there will be no shortage of dry fruits for Eid. But if the war continues, then the situation will be bad," he said.

However, a few traders have already begun rising prices to counter the likely loss of supply in the coming months. "We've hiked the price of pistachios by Rs 200 to Rs 300 as they are in demand right now and we don't have lot of stock," said Abdul Hameed, owner of KH Mewa in Shivajinagar.

Iranian saffron

The price of Iranian saffron, considered to be the best variety of saffron across the globe, currently set at Rs 2.5 lakh to 3 lakh per kg, is expected to touch Rs 4 lakh in about two weeks, predict traders.

Currently, pistachos from Iran are priced between Rs 1,800 and 2,100 per kg, while figs, mamra almonds and pine nuts are priced around Rs 1,600, Rs 2,500 and 8,000, respectively.

Spices imported

Apart from dry fruits, spices like nutmeg, cinnamon and star anise are imported from Iran.

"The abrupt closure of trade in Iran will also impact the inflow of dry fruits from Afghanistan. Now that Iranian ports are impacted, this will cause a severe dearth of dry fruits in the near future. The wholesale traders will jack up prices," said Mohammed Ajaz, who manages a store in Yeshwantpur.

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Bengaluru sees fall in traffic speeds after safety campaign: Report

BENGALURU, DHNS

A strategic series of media campaigns and police action has managed to slow down Bengaluru's notoriously fast-moving traffic. According to a new evaluation report, the city has seen a significant drop in average speed and a marginal decline in road fatalities over a three-month period.

The Karnataka Mass Media Campaign Evaluation Report, launched on Monday by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (Nimhans) in collaboration with the Karnataka State Road Safety Authority (KSRSA) and Vital Strategies, revealed that average vehicle speeds in Bengaluru plummeted by 9.4 km/h, falling from 45.91 km/h to 36.56 km/h.

The campaign, titled Motorcycle Reconstruction, featured road safety expert G Gururaj and was aired across 12 TV channels, 500 cinema screens, and hundreds of billboards starting in November 2025.

The report highlights that the "instructional-style" campaign did more than just inform; it drove compliance. Data shows that 47% of riders who recalled the campaign messages reported following speed limits, compared to 4% among those who had not seen it.

Joint Commissioner of Police Karthik Reddy, along with other officials, releases the Motorcycle Reconstruction Campaign Evaluation Report in Bengaluru on Monday.

The messaging was backed by a sharp spike in enforcement. Speeding violations detected across the state rose from 49,717 to 55,311 during the campaign period, with fine collections increasing by 11%, totalling over Rs 5.5 crore.

"We strongly believe that the media narrative helps us in traffic management," said Karthik Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic). He noted that while the reduction in deaths — 13 lives saved during the period — was not significant, the shift in speed is a positive indicator that the city is on the right track.

Dr Gautham M Sukumar, professor at Nimhans, emphasised that knowledge of speed limits increased from 25.8% to 30%. "The message has been drilled into a significant section of road users, which will indirectly save lives," he said.

The KSRSA plans to replicate this model in districts with high fatality rates. Recommendations in the report suggest tailoring future campaigns specifically for two-wheeler users, who remain the most vulnerable group on Karnataka's roads.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds opens new branch in Jayanagar

C K Ramamurthy and Srinidhi Shetty inaugurate the new showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Jayanagar with Addulla Ibrahim and Filsor Babu (on their right) and O Asher (on their left).

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launched a new showroom in Jayanagar 4th Block 33rd Cross on Saturday, strengthening its presence in the city. With this addition, the brand operates 23 showrooms in Bengaluru and 45 showrooms in the Karnataka and Goa regions, reflecting its continued expansion across key urban markets.

The showroom was inaugurated by C K Ramamurthy, MLA, Jayanagar, along with actor Srinidhi Shetty, in the presence of the brand's O Asher, Managing Director - India Operations; Addulla Ibrahim, Group Director and Filsor Babu, Regional Head – Karnataka.

The showroom has been designed to deliver a structured and comfortable experience, aligned with Malabar's service standards and transparent buying practices. The store will showcase a comprehensive range of gold, diamond, platinum and gemstone jewellery, including signature collections curated for bridal, festive, every day and contemporary preferences.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has an exclusive inaugural offer of a free silver coin with every purchase till March 8, 2026 at the new Jayanagar showroom.

M P Ahammad, Chairman, Malabar Group, said, "Bengaluru continues to be a key market for us, supported by strong appreciation of design, craftsmanship and assured buying standards. The Jayanagar showroom enhances accessibility within a well-established residential and commercial neighbourhood, while we continue to offer wider collections and consistent service."

Across its network, Malabar Gold & Diamonds follows uniform customer assurance practices, including transparent billing with detailed break-ups, HUID-compliant gold, certified diamonds and consistent pricing policies.

With the Jayanagar showroom launch, the brand continues to align its retail formats to evolving customer expectations while maintaining structured quality and process standards.

Curated by DH Brandspot

Recruitments: Bommai urges govt to provide internal quota by consensus

BENGALURU, DHNS: Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai on Monday urged the government to recruit for jobs by implementing internal reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and taking all communities into confidence.

Bommai told reporters here: "I am not aware of the governor approving the internal reservation (bill). The government needs clarity on recruitments. If they have the will, everything is possible. But they are confused. Before recruitments, they should discuss with all communities and take them into confidence".

The Haveri-Gadag MP's statement comes at a time when the government has issued an order to fill 56,432 government job vacancies without following internal reservation.

During Bommai's tenure as chief minister, the reservation share in the state was increased from 50% to 56%, and internal reservation was also announced for SCs, even though the Supreme Court was yet to empower states to do so.

"The government has enforced a law for internal reservation. Thus, all communities are seeking internal reservation. The problem has to be resolved. Legal experts must be consulted".

The Bommai-led BJP government's decision to provide internal reservation — 6% for SC (left)/Madigas, 5.5% for SC (right)/Holeyas, 4.5% for Lambanis, Bhovi, Korma and Korcha communities and 1% for nomadic communities — had electorally backfired as the Lambani, Bhovi, Korma and Korcha communities protested against the distribution.

Lokayukta sleuths arrest BEO, aide in Bhadravathi

SHIVAMOGGA,DHNS: Lokayukta sleuths trapped and arrested a Block Education Officer (BEO) and an intermediary while the duo was receiving a bribe of Rs 1 lakh from the office superintendent in Bhadravathi, Shivamogga district, on Monday.

The sleuths said that the complainant Lingaraju, the office superintendent, had requested BEI Nagendrappa for an increment in his salary, besides his allowances from 2011 to 2023.

Nagendrappa reportedly asked Lingaraju for a bribe of Rs 4 lakh to fulfil his request. Lingaraju immediately intimated the Lokayukta about the demand for the bribe, while informing Nagendrappa that he would pay Rs 1 lakh as his first instalment, and the pending amount later. Acting on Lingaraju's complaint, Lokayukta sleuths raided the BEO's office, and arrested Nagendrappa, and a middleman called Manjunath.

Villagers kill bear that mauled shepherd to death

KUDLIGI (VIJAYANAGARA DISTRICT), DHNS: A shepherd and the bear that fatally attacked him met with the same grisly fate in Halasagara village in Kudligi, Vijayanagara district, on Monday.

Obayya (45) was tending to his flock of sheep in the afternoon on Monday on the outskirts of the village when he was set upon by a bear. The attack left him seriously wounded, and he succumbed to his injuries almost instantly. Enraged, villagers armed with sticks and canes, proceeded to the forest, where they proceeded to club the bear to death. Incidentally, the villagers' act was caught on camera. Obayya is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department in Gudekote was intimated about the incident, as were the police.

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/Santragachi, South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur Division acting on behalf of the President of India invites open tender, through e-Tendering in **www.ireps.gov.in** website as per details mention below : **Tender Notice No. : Elect-Chg-OT-25-26-RMPU1; Name of work :** Comprehensive annual maintenance contract (CAMC) of Roof mounted Package units (RMPUs) of LHB/SG AC Coaches for a period of three (3) years at the Coaching Maintenance Depots (Santragachi, Shalimar and Padmapukur); **Tender Value :** ₹ 15,08,49,741.07; **EMD/Bid Security :** ₹ 9,04,300.00; **Tender Document Cost :** NIL; **Tender Closing Date & Time :** 23/03/2026 at 11:00 hrs.; Eligible contractors are requested to apply for the same through online only, in **www.ireps.gov.in** website. No offline tender will be accepted for this tender. Please read the tender document carefully uploaded in the document section for details. Tender Notice, tender document and other details are given in the **www.ireps.gov.in**. **(PR-1255)**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at large is hereby informed that my client **M/s DS-Max Properties Pvt. Ltd.**, having its office at No. 1794, 14th Main, 30th Cross, HBR Layout, 1st Stage, 5th Block, Bengaluru- 43 and intend to enter into Absolute Sale Deed with Owner **Smt Y.Prashanthi** d/o Sri Y.J.Venkatarao is the absolute owner of converted land property bearing Sy.No.**117/6/A**, Nelamangala City Municipal Council (CMC), in vide; Conversion Order dated **25/01/2024**, in Order No. **580616**, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Rural District, as E-Asthi PID.NO: **8621852211/A**, ODD site, which measuring a portion of **1000.9141272 Sq.mtrs**, (10,773.75 Sq.ft or 10 guntas approx) and bounded on **East by:** Property belonging to Reliance, **West by:** Property of Smt Y.Prashanthi, **North by:** N.H-4, **South by:** Sy.No. 116/1 or Khatha No.902 and whereas **Smt Y.Prashanthi** d/o Sri Y.J.Venkatarao is the absolute owner of property bearing Sy.No. **116/1**, Nelamangala City Municipal Council (CMC), old khatha No.902, Assessment No. 902/A, Ward No 29 as E-Asthi PID.NO: **5796317646/A**, ODD site, which measuring a portion of **447.095880 Sq.mtrs**, (4,812.5 Sq.ft or 4.08 guntas approx), both situated at **Arashinakunte Village**, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on **East by:** Property belonging to Reliance, **West by:** Property of Sri H.Ramachandra Murthy and Smt Vasantha.K, **North by:** Sy.No. 117/6, **South by:** Sy.No. 116/2ABC and referred to as comprised schedule property of **Item No. I**.

WHEREAS Sri Y.J.Venkatarao s/o Sri Yalamanchili Mallayya and **Smt Y.Prashanthi** d/o Sri Y.J.Venkatarao are the absolute owner/s of converted land property bearing Sy.No. **116/2ABC**, in vide; Conversion Order dated **19/04/2005**, in Order No. **ALN(N)SR/180/2004-05**, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Rural District, Nelamangala City Municipal Council (CMC) of Property No.116/2A, Assessment No. 116/2A, as E-Asthi PID.NO: **3980016945/A**, ODD site, which measuring a portion of **3504.5988 Sq.mtrs**, (37,723.187 Sq.ft or 34.08 guntas), which is subject matter of property, situated at **Arashinakunte Village**, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on **East by:** Property of Sy.No. 116/2ABC, **West by:** Private Property, **North by:** Property of Smt Y.Prashanthi, **South by:** Private Property and referred to as schedule property of **Item No. II**.

Sri Y.J.Venkatarao s/o Sri Yalamanchili Mallayya, **Smt.Y.Shreejayanthi** d/o Sri Y.J.Venkatarao are the absolute owner/s of converted land property bearing Sy.No.**116/2ABC**, in vide; Conversion Order dated **19/04/2005**, in Order No. **ALN(N)SR/179/2004-05**, issued by Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Rural District, Nelamangala City Municipal Council (CMC) of Property No.116/2ABC, Assessment No. 116/2ABC, as E-Asthi PID.NO: **3946611662**, ODD site, which total measuring **5564.425185 Sq.mtrs**, out of which a portion of property **4856.22 Sq.mtrs**, (52,272 Sq.ft or 1 acre 08 guntas), which is subject matter of property, situated at **Arashinakunte Village**, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural District and bounded on **East by:** Property of Sri R.Venkatesh, **West by:** Property of Smt Y.Prashanthi, **North by:** Property of Smt Y.Prashanthi, **South by:** Property of Thopaiah and referred to as schedule property of **Item No. III**.

which total measuring of **Item. No. I, II & III = 1000.9141272 + 447.095880 + 3,504.5988 + 4,856.22 = 9,808.8288072 Sq.mtrs** (1,05,581.354573 Sq.ft or 2 acre 17 guntas) and commonly bounded on **East by:** Private Property, **West by:** Private Property, **North by:** N.H-4 Road, **South by:** Private Lands and referred to as **"Composite Schedule Property".**

Any person or Authority or promoters having any asserting right, title, interest and claims to oppose for Absolute Sale Deed of property and further having any manner of right, title, claims etc., and may lodge their objections, claims over the property along with relevant papers in support of their claims, right to the below address within **07** days from the date of this notice, if any objections fails to comply, my client shall take further steps and deemed for entering into Absolute Sale Deed of property.

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No.1854, 17th Main, 30th 'B' Cross, HBR Layout, 1st Stage, 5th Block, Bangalore - 560 043.
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Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), Bengaluru
Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)
Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India

Expression of Interest (EoI)

The CCRAS invites Expression of Interest from eligible establishments for availing incubation support from Ayurvedic Sciences Incubation Centre (ASIC) at the Central Ayurveda Research Institute, Bengaluru. The programme aims to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialization of Ayurveda-based products, services and technologies by providing infrastructure support, mentorship, technical guidance, networking opportunities and financial assistance as per applicable norms.

Last date for submission: **25th March 2026, 5:00 PM**

For further details visit: **www.ccras.nic.in or www.cari.gov.in or https://asic.ccras.org.in**

— Assistant Director Incharge, CARI Bengaluru
CBC 17201/11/0023/2526

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER
(only through KPP-Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (Kavari), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bengaluru-560 009

Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
Kaveri-3	BWSSB/EE (K-3)/AEE(K-3)-1/2/3/494/2025-26 Date: 02.03.2026	Rs. 63,77,800/- / Rs.1,28,000/-	17.03.2026 Upto 3.00 P.M.	18.03.2026 at 4.00 P.M.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, (Kaveri-3)

The details regarding the tender & participation in the e-Procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/DD-C.P/5931/KSMCA/2025-26

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
R.C.D. , ROAD DIVISION, SAHIBGANJ
e- Procurement Notice
(2nd Call)
e-Tender Reference no.- **RCD/SAHIBGANJ/140/2025-26**
Dated : 28.02.2026

1	Name of Work	**Construction of High Level Bridge over Margang River in 9th KM of Shobhanpur Bhatta to Rajgaon Road under Road Division Sahibganj for the year 2025-26**
2 (a)	Estimated Cost (Rs)	**Rs. 11,15,98,778.00** (Rupees Eleven Crore Fifteen Lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Eight and Zero Paise) Only.
(b)	Bid Security (Rs)	**11,16,000.00** (Rupees Eleven Lakh and Sixteen Thousand) Only.
3	Time of Completion	18 (Eighteen) Months
4	Last date / Time for receipt of bids	24.03.2026 upto 12.00 Noon
5	Date of Publication of Tender on website	11.03.2026 from 10.30 A.M.
6	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Executive Engineer, R.C.D. Road Division, Sahibganj
7	Contact no. of Procurement officer	8271102250
8	Helpline number of e- Procurement cell	0651 - 2401010

Further details can be seen on website ***http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in***

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT
ROAD DIVISION, SAHIBGANJ

PR 373915 District(25-26)D

Metro Railway, Kolkata

e-Tender is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work: **Name of work:** Execution of works for providing Divyangjan Toilet, low height ticket counter, low height water booth and Ramp at different stations of Blue Line of Metro Railway, Kolkata. **Approx Cost of Work:** ₹ 2,01,86,531.91, **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,50,900/-. **Completion Period:** 09 (Nine) Months, **Date and Time of Closing:** 25.03.2026 at 12:00 hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website **www.ireps.gov.in.** Amendments/ Corrigendum, if any, would be uploaded only on the website.
Abridged e-Tender Notice No.: Civil-2556-2026-(Open)
Follow us at: /metrorailwaykol /metrorailkolkata

Metro Railway, Kolkata

e-Tender is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway for the following work: **Name of work:** "Rehabilitation/Repair/Replacement of cooling tower foundation, TSS/RSS building and other miscellaneous work between Km 7/14 to Km 16/18 (KCEN to KMUK) of Blue Line of Metro Railway, Kolkata." **Approx. Cost of Work:** Rs. 2,30,29,751.72, **Earnest Money :** Rs. 2,65,200, **Completion Period:** 09 (Nine) Months, **Date and Time of Closing:** 25.03.2026 at 12:00 Hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website **www.ireps.gov.in** Amendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be uploaded only on the website.
Abridged e-Tender Notice No. : Civil-2560-2026-(Open)
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KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal Only)

KPTCL invites tenders from the eligible bidders for the following works.

No. CEE/Tr(OP)Z/KLB/SEE/AEE-3/2025-26/14864 **Date: 27.02.2026**

1) Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/SS/2025-26/Mallapura additional Dtd: 29-12-2025 (Call-2) for Providing additional 1X20MVA, 110/11kV Transformer at 110kV Mallapura sub-station in Gangavathi Taluk, Koppal District.

No. CEE/Tr(Op)Z/KLB/SEE/AEE-3/2025-26/14843 **Date: 27.02.2026**

2) Enquiry No: KPTCL/TL/25-26/Ganadal LILO line Dtd. 19-12-2025 (Call-2) for Construction of 110KV LILO Line to 110KV Ganadal sub-station by utilizing 110KV DC towers from the tapping point of existing 110KV Kushtagi-Kanakagiri Line for a distance of 1.62Kms along with construction of 1 no. of Terminal bay at 110kV Ganadal sub-station in Yelburga Taluk, Koppal District on total turnkey basis, including supply of all matching materials/equipment's and erection (including Civil works) of all materials/equipment's, testing and commissioning

For more information log on to KPTCL website: **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **03.03.2026.**

Sd/- **Chief Engineer (Electy.), Transmission(Operations) Zone, KPTCL, 1st Floor, "PRASARANA BHAVAN", Sedam Road, Kalaburagi-585105.**

GREATER BENGALURU AUTHORITY
Office of Special Commissioner (Revenue & IT),
NR Square, Bengaluru - 560002
No:GBA/SC(R & IT)/E-203840/2025-26 **Date: 26-02-2026**

NOTIFICATION FOR CONSULTANT

The **Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA)** invites applications from **experienced consultants** to **train and up skill of engineers in AI-assisted software development.**

The engagement will focus on the **practical, hands-on application** of AI development tools-such as **Claude Code** and **Cursor-**applied directly to **live departmental projects and existing code bases,** enabling measurable improvements in development efficiency and code quality.

For detailed eligibility criteria, scope of work and engagement terms, kindly visit: **https://gba.karnataka.gov.in/updates/** Apply with request adressed to **Special Commissioner (IT) GBA**, GBA Head Office, Hudson Circle, Bengaluru-560002 **by 05-03-2026**

Sd/- Special Commissioner (Revenue & IT)
Greater Bengaluru Authority

Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Sandal City: P.B. No. 5531, Bengaluru-Pune Highway, Bengaluru - 560 055.
Ph: 080-22164879, 22164886, Website: www.mysoresandal.org e-mail: **ksdl.dgmmtls@gmail.com**
An ISO-9001:2015 & 14001:2015 Company
Date: 02.03.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tenders are invited by **KS&DL** in two cover system through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (Website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/**) with respect to supply of following Goods/Services/Works.

Sl. No.	Tender Number	Tender Name	Tender Quantity	Published date	Last Date of Submission
1	KSDL/2025-26/IND1073	Procurement of Potash Alum Powder	12 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
2	KSDL/2025-26/IND1074	Procurement of Blue Colour Powder	1500 Kgs	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
3	KSDL/2025-26/IND1075	Procurement of Starch	23 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
4	KSDL/2025-26/IND1076	Procurement of Cosmetic Grade Talc 300 mesh	520 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
5	KSDL/2025-26/IND1079	Procurement of Cocodiethanolamide	2000 Kgs	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
6	KSDL/2025-26/IND1080	Procurement of Polyquaternium 7	3.5 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
7	KSDL/2025-26/IND1081	Procurement of Alpha Olefin Sulfonate (AOS Powder)	3 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
8	KSDL/2025-26/IND1082	Procurement of ROSAMINE HL (Cl. No. 45100)	73 Kgs	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
9	KSDL/2025-26/IND1083	Procurement of Olivem-400	322 Kgs	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
10	KSDL/2025-26/IND1084	Procurement of Zinc Stearate	2700 Kgs	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
11	KSDL/2025-26/IND1085	Procurement of Soda Speckles Blue & Red	3 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
12	KSDL/2025-26/IND1077	Procurement of Cosmetic Grade Talc 800 mesh	76 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
13	KSDL/2025-26/IND1078	Procurement of Sodium Lauryl Ether Sulphate SLES	135 MT	27-02-2026	16-03-2026
14	KSDL/2025-26/IND1000	Procurement of New Semi-Auto Double Nozzle Liquid filling machine	1 No.	28-02-2026	16-03-2026
15	KSDL/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT38	Construction of new PEB warehouse in employees car parking area at KS&DL, Bengaluru complex.	Works	28-02-2026	23-03-2026
16	KSDL/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT39	Construction of New PEB Warehouse at KSDL, Bengaluru Complex	Works	28-02-2026	23-03-2026
17	KSDL/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT40	Construction of new storage godown in the area available next to Engineering store at KS&DL, Bengaluru Complex.	Works	28-02-2026	16-03-2026
18	KSDL/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT41	Fabrication of heavy duty storage Industrial Shelves in new CBs godown for storing Engineering items	Works	28-02-2026	16-03-2026

For any further queries/clarifications please contact the undersigned.

Sd/- Asst. General Manager (Materials)

S. E. RAILWAY E– TENDER

Tender Notice No.: PCMM/GENL/TP/2026/07 **Dated: 26/02/2026**
The Principal Chief Materials Manager, South Eastern Railway, Hd. Qrs. Office (5th Floor), New administrative Building, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-tenders which have been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in** as follows. All the tenders will be closed at 14.00 hrs. :

SL. No.	Tender No.	Closing Date	Brief Description	Qty.	EMD (in Rs.)
1	**65255044**	31.03.26	Lock Bolting (Huck Bolting) Machine (Pre-bid meeting on 17.03.26 at 12:00 hrs. at PCMM Meeting Room/SER/GRC/Kol-43)	03 Set.	1,41,420/-
2	**76263027A**	19.03.26	Manual Metal Arc Welding Electrode, Size: 4 mm x 350 mm, etc.	272870 Mtrs.	1,78,730/-
3	**HB261016**	12.03.26	AMOXICILLIN SODIUM + CLAVULANATE POTASSIUM 500MG. + 125MG etc.	494000 Tabs.	89,560/-
4	**HB261013**	16.03.26	Inj. Piperacillin + Tazobactum 4 gm + 0.5 gm Vial.	38400 Vials.	99,100/-
5	**HB261007**	13.03.26	Inj. Meropenem 1gm Vial.	15400 Vials.	1,98,110/-
6	**60260053**	13.04.26	Manufacture and Supply of Composite Grooved Rubber Sole Plates 10 mm etc.	400000 Nos.	20,00,000/-
7	**6026RGC02**	19.03.26	Manufacturing and Supply of 10 mm thick pocket type Nylon Cord Reinforced Grooved Rubber Sole Plates etc.	380 Set.	10,89,620/-
8	**29255115A**	27.03.26	Blower for Oil Cooling Unit with Casing etc.	21 Nos.	1,09,030/-
9	**17250002**	30.03.26	Spare Kit For 2 Yearly Maintenance Schedule (GD Compressor).	36.Set.	3,52,990/-
10	**29255136**	30.04.26	Tri Plate Panel Mounted IRAB-9 brake system for conventional loco etc.	30 Nos.	3,97,350/-
11	**IF265133**	20.03.26	Submersible sewage/de-watering Pump.	36 Nos.	1,11,550/-
12	**IE265066**	27.03.26	HT Three Core Power Cable 2000 Mtrs.	2000 Mtrs.	1,46,130/-
13	**29255068B**	13.03.26	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of IP Based Video Surveillance System etc.	1434 Set.	50,00,000/-
14	**38253011**	16.03.26	Centre Pivot Washer for CASNUB Bogie. Drawing No. : RDSO's Drg. No. WD-85079-S-02, Alt. 28 , Item No. 4..	49350 Nos.	122280.00/-

Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full Details/Description/Specification of the tenders and submit their Bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **N.B:** Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders & any Corrigendum published thereafter. **(PR-1250)**

Protection of child rights will be discussed in legislature, says Horatti

BENGALURU, DHNS: Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti on Monday said that one day of the upcoming legislative session would be reserved for discussions on the protection of the rights of children.

Flagging off a state-level consultative meeting organised by the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Horatti said, "Protection of children's rights is every individual's foremost duty. Lack of communication in the family can have an adverse impact on children. Small issues create differences in the family, which, in turn, affect children's minds. It is everybody's responsibility to protect children, teach them good values and build a safe future for them."

'Issue circulars'

Karnataka Minister for Municipal Administration Rahim Khan said that the concerned officials had been instructed to issue circulars on organising special urban sessions for kids where children's problems would be heard, and quick solutions offered.

10 yrs after NGT order, projects get nod sans carrying capacity check

Greens question need for new panel as report of earlier one gathers dust

The Sharavathi pumped storage project is only one of the several projects the government has approved without referring to the report.

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Nearly 10 years after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) order directed the state government to look into the carrying capacity of the Western Ghats before approving projects, the government continues to green signal projects.

This, even as a carrying capacity report, accessed by *DH*, has been gathering dust.

Last year, Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre set up a new committee of senior IFS officers to assess the carrying capacity of the Ghats.

The order came following protests from conservationists that approvals were given without assessing cumulative impact of projects on the Ghats.

Even as the committee continues to work on a report, *DH* learnt that the government is sitting on a carrying capacity report by a committee set up by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

The committee, in which the chief wildlife warden of Karnataka was a member, submitted the report as far back as July 2018.

It adopted the 1,533 eco sensitive areas (ESAs) as demarcated by the high-level working group, but took up a new approach to rank sensitivity based on endemism of species, altitude of area, rainfall data, threatened animals, rare species, flagship species and corridor value.

As many as 1,281 villages (88%) were classified as ecologically very high sensitive zones (ESZ-I), 56 (3.83%) as highly sensitive (ESZ-II) and 12 (7.92%) villages as medium sensitive. It left out 12 villages due to lack of full data.

"The committee suggests declaring the entire ESZ-1 (1,281 villages) as 'no go area' for all developmental activities to protect ecosystem vitality and human health," it said, noting that infrastructure needs have to be assessed by multidisciplinary expert institutions. Going by its line, the pumped storage project in Sharavathi valley lion-tailed macaque sanctuary should have been rejected.

The committee suggested cumulative impact assessment of over 26 hydropower projects in the Ghats and a study of their impact on rivers.

The Sharavathi PSP is only one of the several projects the government has approved without referring to the report. The others are the widening of national highway 202 between Tumakuru and Shivamogga approved in Feb 2019, construction of a stretch of NH-766C, besides the illegal approval (since quashed) to the Hubballi-Ankola railway line.

NGT orders ignored

The MoEF&CC set up the committee after an order by the NGT in Feb 2016.

Its mandate was "to conduct a comprehensive study to assess carrying capacity of Western Ghats region in Karnataka".

Asked why the report was not considered, department sources said there was no government order passed to that effect.

To a question, Khandre said he was not aware of the report. "If such a report exists, it has not been brought to my notice. I will seek a copy of it soon," he said.

Sagar-based conservationist Akhilesh Chipli rued that the report's recommendations had been ignored.

"It is unfortunate that the department has not referred to the report for the last few years. The government is once again investing time and resources to conduct another carrying capacity study. What's the use of more studies if they are not implemented," he asked.

Principal chief conservator of forests (head of forest force) Meenakshi Negi, who heads the latest committee, said they will look into all carrying capacity reports of the Ghats to come up with recommendations.

VTU to seek govt nod to grant affiliation to foreign colleges

'Saudi Arabia, Dubai and South Africa colleges seeking recognition'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) is looking to extend its affiliation to engineering colleges even outside India.

Following requests from some institutions operating outside India seeking affiliation from VTU, Vice Chancellor S Vidyashankar has decided to write to the government seeking permission for the same. According to the information available from the university, there are requests from the colleges located in countries like Saudi Arabia, Dubai (the UAE) and South Africa seeking recognition from VTU.

"It's time to extend our reach internationally," said an official of the university. But this requires clearance from the Department of Higher Education.

Prof Vidyashankar said, "We are currently permitted to grant recognition only within the state. But as we are getting requests seeking recognition even from institutions functioning abroad, I will soon write to the government seeking permission. If the government gives a nod, then the university will gain greater popularity even at the international level."

Currently, VTU has 220 affiliated colleges, and all are operating within Karnataka. The university said three lakh students are pursuing various technical courses. Interestingly, VTU is the university with the highest number of affiliated colleges in the country. The university offers engineering, BTech, MBA and MTech programmes.

"In recent years, the university has gained more popularity. It has delivered results within an hour after the completion of the examinations. The curriculum has been updated as per industry needs and giving importance to skill-based education. Moreover, VTU graduates are working at reputed companies across the globe. This has attracted some foreign colleges' interest in VTU's affiliation," an official said.

Satish Jarkiholi.

Quota in jobs: Minister defends govt decision

DAVANGERE, DHNS: Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi has defended the decision of the state government to proceed with the government appointments as per the old reservation system.

"There is a demand to fill 56,432 posts after implementing internal reservation for Scheduled Castes. However, nothing can be done without a settlement in the court. Therefore, there is no point in waiting for the court's verdict. So, we have decided to continue with the old reservation," he said.

Speaking to reporters at Rajanahalli in Harihar taluk in the district on Monday, Jarkiholi said that as of now, the state government has decided to continue with the recruitment based on the reservation matrix - 15% for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 3% for Scheduled Tribes (STs).

'Burden'

When questioned whether guarantees have become a burden for the government, he said, if Rs 60,000 crore is needed for guarantee schemes, then naturally it will be a burden.

'No stadium in T Narsipur if it harms Mysore silk brand'

MYSURU, DHNS

Stepping in to clear the air over the controversial sports stadium project on the silk filature land at T Narsipur in the district, social welfare and Mysuru district incharge Minister H C Mahadevappa, on Monday, assured that the government would not proceed with it, if it poses a threat to the historic Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC) that produces Mysore silk sarees.

Speaking to reporters here, Mahadevappa clarified that there was 'no question' of closing the silk factory.

"Some people are unnecessarily creating confusion among the people. The initial plan was to utilise 1.5 acres of unused land of KSIC, originally earmarked for silk market expansion, for a stadium. However, we have decided to re-examine that order," he said.

The minister said the government was not rigid on the location.

"The silk factory is our priority. The government does not view this as a prestige issue. If the stadium project is found to be detrimental to the factory's operations or its environment, we will not build it there. Our responsibility is to protect the factory's legacy," he said.

Urging the workers of KSIC and the public not to panic, the minister lashed out at BJP for 'politicising' the matter.

"The Opposition is playing games with sensitive issues to create unrest. Our government is committed to the growth of the silk industry. I have already held a meeting with officials of the sports and sericulture departments to discuss the technicalities. If it is deemed absolutely necessary to save the factory's interests, the stadium plan at that specific spot will be dropped," Mahadevappa said.

Oil surges, war widens beyond Gulf

Iran, From Page 1

Israel responded with sweeping airstrikes, which it said targeted the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut and struck senior militants. Lebanese state news agency NNA said an initial tally showed 31 people had been killed and 149 injured.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps announced a new wave of strikes against Israel later on Monday even as Tehran fired missiles and drones at Gulf states and a British air base in far-away Cyprus.

The US military said Kuwait's air defences had mistakenly shot down three American F-15E fighter jets during an Iranian attack. All six crew members ejected and were safely recovered.

In a sign Iran's rulers are still reaching out to the outside world, a senior Iranian security official contacted Reuters to say Iran was defending itself against aggressors and would continue to do so.

AI Express ops, Indigo relief flights start today

Flights, from Page 1

This was done through AirSewa, social media platforms and dedicated helpline calls, in coordination with airlines and stakeholders concerned.

Passengers are advised to check official airline channels for accurate updates regarding cancellations and rescheduling.

For assistance, it said fliers could contact the PACR helpline numbers at 011-24604283/24632987.

Separately, Air India Express said it will resume flight operations to and from Muscat starting Tuesday with scheduled services to Delhi, Kochi, Kozhikode, Mangaluru, Mumbai and Tiruchirappalli.

The first Air India Express flight from Muscat will operate to Tiruchirappally, departing at 10.25 am local time.

However, an Air India Express spokesperson said, flight operations to Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE remain suspended until 11.59 pm on Tuesday.

The IndiGo website showed that its services continue to be impacted with 162 cancellations on Tuesday.

It has also cancelled 136 services on Wednesday and 15 on Thursday.

Officials also said Air India and Air India Express cancelled over 110 services on Monday while SpiceJet cancelled at least 20 flights. Akasa Air did not operate eight flights. Mumbai airport saw 116 cancellations while Delhi had 87, Bengaluru 72 and Chennai airport 28.

Air India on Monday said it has extended the suspension of all its flights to and from the Middle East for March 3 while its scheduled operations to US, Canada, Europe and UK have commenced.

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) said travel bookings for routes linked to West Asia have witnessed 20-25% cancellations and rescheduling. Tension in the region also had an impact on the shares of airline companies and tour and travel-related service providers, which saw a decline.

Canada, India seal Rs 17k-cr pact for uranium supply

Canada, from Page 1

"There has been more engagement between the Canadian and Indian governments in the last year than there has been in more than two decades combined," Carney said.

Seeking to reduce their exposure to the US markets, India and Canada finalised the terms of reference of a free trade deal, which the two sides pledged would be concluded by the end of this year. The two nations hailed the agreements reached as a "new era of partnership".

Under Carney's leadership, Canada has sought to mend ties with India after relations between the two countries plummeted after Ottawa linked New Delhi with the assassination of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in 2023. India vehemently rejected allegations by Carney's predecessor. India's second nuclear power plant at Rawal Bhata in Rajasthan was set up with Canadian support in 1975.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar called on the visiting PM, as the two sides discussed a "forward-looking partnership".

The two sides also finalised agreements in areas such as technology, critical minerals, space, defence and education as Modi held bilateral talks with his Canadian counterpart.

Carney is scheduled to travel to Australia and Japan after concluding his visit to India. This is being seen as a part of Canada's efforts to diversify its strategic ties in the backdrop of plummeting ties with Washington under the Trump administration.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast March 03: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	34	16.8	00
Bidar	33.4	19.5	00
Vijayapura	35.1	19.5	00
Dharwad	33.6	17.4	00
Haveri	34.4	18.2	00
Kalaburagi	36.8	20.2	00
Raichur	36	21	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	31.6	20.5	00
Karwar	33.4	21.8	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	32	23.3	00

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	30.8	18	00
Bengaluru	31.8	21.1	00
Ballari	NA	NA	00
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	33.6	18.9	00
Davangere	33.5	18	00
Hassan	32.2	13.6	00
Mysuru	33.2	19	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	33.4	16.2	00

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	30.7	15.1	00
Kolkata	33.6	24.6	00
Mumbai	30.8	19.9	00
Chennai	33.7	22.7	00
Pune	34.5	16.3	00
Hyderabad	34.8	22.2	00
Th'puram	33.6	23	00

ADVERTORIAL

Two Journeys, One Message: Early Intervention Changes Everything

Free Hearing camp being held at Apollo Hospital

On the occasion of World Hearing Day, I would like to share the inspiring journey of my 2 daughters Punarvi (10 years) and Sonavi (5 years) whose lives reflect resilience, awareness, and the life-changing power of early intervention.

When Punarvi was born, everything appeared normal. However, as months passed, her speech milestones were delayed. Initially, we were reassured that some children speak late. It was only when she was 2 years and 2 months old that we discovered she had bilateral hearing loss, and that her diagnosis had been missed earlier. That moment changed everything.

Acceptance was the hardest step. As parents, it was overwhelming to process the delay and the lost time. There were fears, doubts, and constant questions - Would she speak? Could she catch up? Had we missed her critical years?

But what followed was determination. Punarvi was fitted with hearing aids and with intensive speech therapy, consistent effort, the right hearing support devices, and guidance from dedicated audiologists, therapists and doctors, Punarvi slowly began bridging her missed milestones. Progress did not happen overnight. It came with daily practice, structured intervention, emotional strength, and unwavering belief. Every small word was a victory. A few months ago, she underwent cochlear implant surgery on one side, adding a new chapter to her hearing journey. Today, she continues to grow, learn, and surprise us - proving that delays are not the end of the story.

When our younger daughter Sonavi was born, awareness made all the difference. Early screening helped identify her hearing challenge at the right time. This time, there was no delay - early diagnosis, early surgery, and immediate therapy.

Venkatesh, Puneetha BN, Sonavi, Punarvi

Dr. Sunil Narayan Dutt
Cochlear Implant Surgeon

The impact was remarkable.

Sonavi underwent bilateral cochlear implant surgery at the age of 1.5 years old, Which helped her develop speech naturally and confidently.
She communicates clearly, learns music, and sings songs with joy. Her journey beautifully demonstrates how timely action can shape a child's future.

Together, their stories teach us powerful lessons:

- Early hearing screening is crucial.
- Timely diagnosis transforms outcomes.
- Intensive therapy makes a measurable difference.
- Appropriate hearing devices open doors to sound and speech.
- Above all, parental acceptance &consistent effort change destinies.

Hearing loss is not a limitation - delayed action is. Today, Punarvi and Sonavi stand as living proof that with support, technology, therapy, and determination, children with hearing challenges can thrive. They are not defined by their diagnosis. They are defined by their courage, strength, and limitless potential.

"From the world of silence to the world of music, a cochlear implant turns every sound into a miracle and every note into a story of hope."
Happy World Hearing Day
Dr. Sunil Narayan Dutt.

As their mother, I have learned that the journey is not about asking "Why us?" but about believing "Why not us?" With the right help and the right mindset, our children are not behind - they are simply on their own powerful path. And that path is unstoppable.

This World Hearing Day, let us spread awareness - because early intervention does not just improve hearing; it transforms lives.

Register for the camp
Registration for the camp is mandatory. Please call to register.
Limited slots available.
Call: 97313 94240/9686246302
Dates: 3 (Tues.) to 7 (Sat.) March 26
Venue: Apollo Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru.

Study finds gaps in conduct of children's Grama Sabha in Chikkodi taluk

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

A recent review of children's Grama Sabhas, children's village assemblies involving government officials and NGOs, in Chikkodi taluk of Belagavi district, has found significant gaps in documentation, follow-up action and meaningful participation by children, despite the state government's push to make Gram Panchayats (GPs) more child-friendly.

The report, titled 'Towards an Effective and Child-Friendly Makkala Grama Sabhe', was prepared by ActionAid Karnataka Projects (AKP).

It examined the conduct of Sabhas in nine Gram Panchayats between November 2025 and January 2026, and reviewed proceedings from 36 GPs across the taluk.

The nine GPs examined were Bellakud, Kallol, Ingali, Jainapur, Bambalwad, Umrani, Mugali, Yadur, and Nagarmunnoli.

While eight of the nine GPs studied had conducted Makkala Grama Sabhas during the three months, most meeting records uploaded on the Panchatantra portal were found to be vague and lacking in detail.

In several cases, the minutes did not clearly record the issues raised by children, the decisions taken, the officials responsible, or the timelines for action.

ActionAid volunteers organised preparatory meetings with the children in all nine grama panchayats to help them understand the purpose of such Makkala Grama Sabha. The study highlights a consistent mismatch between concerns voiced by children during preparatory meetings and those reflected in official records.

In the preparatory sessions organised by volunteers, children raised specific demands such as drinking water facilities, construction of toilets, repairs of school infrastructure, better bus services, shortage of teachers, more playgrounds, and fixing and installation of streetlights.

However, the formal Sabha records largely focused on broad themes, such as child rights, nutrition, prevention of child marriage and child labour, without detailing concrete local issues.

"It was almost as if there was a script that was being followed. The proceedings were generic in nature and mostly did not pay heed to the problems shared by children. Plus, we noticed that children were only asked to share problems related to their school life, and not individual or community-related issues," said Raghavendra B Pachhapur, Senior Lead Projects, AKP.

He added that only Nagarmunnoli Gram Panchayat stood out for maintaining detailed minutes, assigning responsibilities to specific departments and setting clear deadlines ranging from one to eight months.

It also reviewed progress on the previous year's demands. In contrast, most other Panchayats neither tracked past issues nor specified implementing authorities or completion timelines.

Overall, Six GPs — Jodukurali, Kadapur, Kothali, Navihalli, Nagarmunnoli and Patankodi — included a list of children's issues or demands in their meeting reports, while others mentioned them either in one line or just mentioned discussions on child rights.

In some Panchayats, reports of Sabhas were either missing or uploaded despite meetings reportedly not being held.

The report also points to procedural lapses. Elections to child representative bodies were not conducted in several places, grievance redressal mechanisms such as complaint boxes were absent, and Makkala Snehithas or Bala Mitras (designated child-friendly contact persons) had not been appointed.

"As a part of our recommendations, we have pointed to the need for children to be treated equally. For example, in most of the meetings, officials sat on chairs, while children sat on the floor. This reinforces existing hierarchies and discourages open expression," added Pachhapur, highlighting the need for improved documentation, clear assignment of responsibilities, and time-bound action.

A copy of the report has been submitted to the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka.

Interim relief to actor Ranveer Singh extended till March 9

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka High Court on Monday extended the interim relief granted to Hindi actor Ranveer Singh in the crime registered against him for his mimicry of a character in the Kannada movie 'Kantara: Chapter 1' till March 9.

On February 24, the court had passed an interim order directing the Bengaluru police not to take any coercive steps against him, subject to the condition that he cooperates with the investigation.

On Monday, the additional state public prosecutor informed the court that the actor has sought time in response to the notices sent by the police.

Senior advocate Sajan Povayya, appearing for the actor, sought time to respond to the objections. Justice M Nagaprasanna adjourned the hearing by a week.

Ranveer Singh has challenged the FIR registered against him by the High Grounds police in Bengaluru for his act.

During his speech International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa, Ranveer Singh appreciated the acting skills of Rishab Shetty in 'Kantara: Chapter 1' and mimicked the female daiva 'Chamundi' portrayed by Shetty in the film.

Backward Classes panel dives into criteria, eligibility

Socio-edu backwardness may supersede economic factors

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

In the run-up to submitting the much-anticipated Social and Educational Survey report, the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes (KSCBC) is extensively discussing the criteria and weightage to assess the backwardness of communities.

The weightage is believed to be extremely crucial, as it determines the yardstick for determining backwardness. The data collected will be evaluated based on the weightage formula.

According to a source, the commission is likely to stick to the 3:2:1 formula given by the previous Jayaprakash Hegde-led KSCBC.

The Hegde commission, which submitted a report based on the Kantharaj Commission's survey in 2015, measured backwardness on a scale of 200 points, awarding points as per the 3:2:1 ratio for social, educational and economic indices, respectively (100 points for social, 68 for educational and 32 for economic backwardness). The higher the score, the more backward a community is.

However, another source told *DH* that the commission was likely to settle on the 5:4:2 formula to measure social, educational and economic backwardness, respectively.

Both ratios are extremely similar and essentially uphold the principle that social and educational backwardness, in that order, are more dominant factors in determining the backwardness of any caste or community than economic factors.

This essentially means that a historically backward and marginalised community with financial mobility is likely to be considered more backward than a historically privileged community with economic constraints.

Proponents of social justice believe that social and educational backwardness are decisive in determining backwardness, and have vehemently opposed the 10% reservation provided by the Modi government to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) through the 103rd Constitutional amendment.

By following the 3:2:1 formula, the Hegde-led Commission had concluded that the Uppara community, with a backwardness score of 134.88/200, was the most backward amongst 22 communities.

With a backwardness score of 11.29/200, Brahmins were found to be the most forward community. The Hegde Commission report was set aside by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who mandated the Naik-led KSCBC to conduct another survey and prepare a report based on it.

While the 2015 survey had covered 94.17% (5.98 crore out of an estimated 6.35 crore), the 2025 survey had a coverage of around 85% (approximately 5.86 crore covered out of an estimated 6.85 crore). The commission is also said to have collected secondary data about caste representation in each government department.

Chairman denies

When contacted, KSCBC Chairman Madhusudan R Naik denied reports that the 5:4:2 formula could be implemented. "We cannot say what the final percentage will be because it's part of a process which isn't ready—it can change tomorrow. But, we have never thought about the 5:4:2 formula."

HDK issues gag orders on poll truck with BJP

Says JD(S) leadership will discuss and decide on it

BENGALURU, DHNS

Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H D Kumarswamy on Monday instructed leaders and members of JD(S) not to discuss the party's alliance with the BJP in public.

Participating in a party meeting attended by leaders from the Greater Bengaluru area, Kumaraswamy, who is also the president of the Karnataka unit of the JD(S), said, "Nobody should speak about the alliance. The party's leadership will discuss the issue, and decide on it. You should concentrate on strengthening the party, and bringing NDA to power in Bengaluru city."

The Union Minister spoke to leaders from all the 28 Assembly constituencies across Bengaluru, and the newly appointed office bearers of the party's Greater Bengaluru unit. Exhorting leaders and workers to strengthen the party at the ward and booth level, Kumaraswamy said, "People in Bengaluru are tired of the Congress government. They will naturally opt for BJP and JD(S). So, everyone should work to bring the NDA to power."

'Congress legislators spied upon'

Kumaraswamy claimied that the government was tapping phones and alleged that Congress legislators were being spied upon, reports DHNS from Mysuru.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru on Monday, Kumaraswamy alleged that the degree of surveillance of members within the government had not been seen hitherto. "Phone tapping existed in every government, and it continues even today. But some people like to pretend they are above such things despite indulging in it. You should ask the current government as to the extent it has risen to of late," the Union Minister said.

Will discuss govt's flaws during Budget session: Ashoka

BENGALURU, DHNS: Claiming that there would be a debt of Rs 1 lakh per person under the current regime, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka said on Monday that the state government's "flaws and shortcomings" would be discussed in the upcoming Budget session.

Addressing a news conference, he said: "In this Budget session, the government's flaws and shortcomings will be discussed. We will fight against the state's economic distress. The Congress is a divided house, with MLAs standing on the streets and issuing threats. The Congress government's term is coming to an end... Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has borrowed at record levels..."

Accusing the Congress of not fulfilling "anything" mentioned in its manifesto, Ashoka noted that Rs 37,000 crore arrears were pending to contractors.

'Act on those mourning Khamenei'

The LoP slammed processions mourning the death of Iran's supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, who was killed in a series of airstrikes by the US and Israel.

Ashoka said: "Khamenei was a dictator, and there was an internal rebellion against him. Atrocities were committed against women there. Thousands of people were shot dead. But in many places in India, including Bengaluru, Muslims have protested in favor of Khamenei..."

Claiming that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government was actively working to bring back Kannadigas stuck in various countries, he said: "Processions in favor of dictator Khamenei should not be held. Legal action should be taken against those who took the law into their own hands and protested. The relationship between India and Israel is good. India is not against any country. My opinion is that there should be no war. The central government has never supported war..."

ON A MISSION

Farmers prepare for transplanting paddy in farmlands near T Narsipur in Mysuru district on Monday. DH PHOTO/ANUP RAGH T

Don't integrate four GPs with Maddur CMC, HDK urges CM

BENGALURU, DHNS: Union Minister and Mandya MP H D Kumaraswamy has written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urging the latter to reconsider the decision to incorporate Gejjalagere, Goravanahalli, Somanahalli and Chamanahalli Gram Panchayats into the Maddur City Municipal Council (CMC).

Kumaraswamy opined that the decision had been taken without holding extensive consultations with the farmers and residents of the villages. "The locals are opposed to the idea, and have been protesting the decision for the past 70 days. It is wrong to take such a decision that goes against the wishes of the people," wrote Kumaraswamy.

The Union Minister sought to draw the CM's attention to the predominance of agriculture in the villages slated for integration with the Maddur CMC. Pointing out that the villages boasted more than 2,000 acres of irrigated land, he added, "The villagers are cultivating a variety of crops. Such being the case, to bring these villages under the purview of the Maddur CMC would go against the people's interests."

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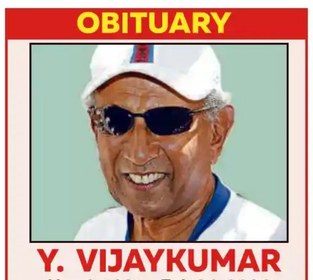
OBITUARY



Y. VIJAYKUMAR
Nov 2, 1931 - Feb 26, 2026
(affectionately known as Viji)
(son of Rev G Yesuvanuja and Mrs Kamlakshamma)
went to be with the Lord on Feb 26, 2026. A celebration of life and burial will be held at Hosur Road, Christian Cemetery Gate No1 on Mar 4th, 2026 at 11:30 am.
"Because I live, you shall live also"
John 14:18
Children and Grandchildren

Face-off between Cong MLA-Minister during KDP meeting in Karwar

KARWAR (UTTARA KANNADA DISTRICT), DHNS

A face-off was witnessed between a Congress MLA and his own party minister during the Karnataka Development Programme (KDP) meeting held at Zilla Panchayat Auditorium in the city on Monday.

MLA Satish Sail was miffed at District In-charge Minister Mankal S Vaidya for not allowing a discussion on shortage of drugs and medicines in government hospitals and staged a walk out.

Intervening during a discussion on health department, Sail claimed that there was shortage of medicines in the government hospitals. However, Vaidya claimed that there was no shortage of medicines in the hospitals in the district.

Congress MLA Satish Sail walks out during the KDP meeting, chaired by Minister Mankal S Vaidya, in Karwar on Monday.

Angered by the response, Sail claimed that people were complaining to him about shortage of medicines as well as doctors in the government hospitals. The MLA said that instead of solving the problems, the minister shouldn't defend by saying that there was no problem. "I am not an illiterate," Sail said.

"Irrespective of the party in power , it is our responsibility to solve people's problem. Due to the minister's non-response, I walked out of the meeting," Sail said.

"There is scope for solving the problems related to shortage of services in government hospitals by obtaining information in the meeting of Arogya Raksha Samiti, headed by the MLA. There is no difference of opinion between MLA and me," Vaidya said.

34 global scientists back quantum material initiative

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka's ambitious 'Quantum City' project received a major international boost as 34 leading scientists from institutions including MIT, Oxford, and Princeton formally endorsed the state's Quantum Materials Innovation Network.

In a letter to Science and Technology Minister N S Boseraju, the global experts hailed the initiative as a critical foundation for next-generation computing and communication. He said that the backing validates Karnataka's goal of building a $20-billion quantum economy by 2035. The signatories include researchers from IISc, TIFR, and Columbia University.

Only government can decide on disqualification of councillor, says High Court

'Regional commissioner can't adjudicate this matter'

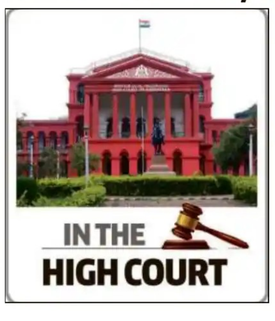
BENGALURU, DHNS

The high court has said that the state government alone is the competent authority to adjudicate the question of disqualification under Section 19 for non-filing or false submission of assets by a councillor under the provisions of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations (KMC) Act.

"It is held that the commissioner, being an executive authority under Section 14 of the KMC Act, is not a competent authority to initiate or adjudicate proceedings under Section 19 of the KMC Act," Justice K S Hemalekha said while partly allowing a petition filed by two councillors of Belagavi City Corporation.

The petitioners, Jayant Jadhav and Nagesh Pawar, challenged the August 26, 2025, show-cause notice issued by the regional commissioner under Section 19 of the KMC Act.

The section stipulates that every councillor shall file a declaration of assets and failure to file and filing of a false declaration results in cessation of office and under Section 19(3).



The show-cause notice was issued based on a complaint against the petitioners that they failed to disclose certain properties in their declaration of assets.

The petitioners contended that under Section 7, the corporation consists of elected councillors, while the commissioner is an executive officer appointed by the government under Section 14. Thus, he is not a member of the corporation, the petitioners contended while arguing that the question of disqualification shall be decided by the government upon a reference made by the corporation.

The authorities contended that the commissioner, being the administrative head, is competent to place material before the appropriate authority and call for an explanation.

After perusing the provisions, the court noted that Section 19 (3) expressly stipulates that any question of disqualification shall be decided by the government on a reference made by the corporation, and the decision of the government shall be final.

Rule 77 of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations (Procedure for the Conduct of Business of the Corporation and Committees) Rules provides that the mayor shall cause the information regarding the failure of any councillor to file a declaration of assets to be placed before the house for reference to the government.

The court further said, "This court hastens to clarify that the object of Section 19 is to ensure probity, transparency and accountability in local self-governance. This court is not condoning any act of non-disclosure. However, even in matters involving probity in public life, the procedure prescribed by statute must be strictly adhered to. When a statute prescribes a particular manner of doing a thing, it must be done in that manner alone. Accordingly, this court holds that the commissioner is not the competent authority to initiate or adjudicate proceedings under Section 19," Justice Hemalekha said.

The court said it is open to the corporation, if it deems it appropriate, to place the matter before the house and act in accordance with section 19 (3) and Rule 77.

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Public are informed that my clients, Mr. B. G. Shankar, aged about 69 years, residing at Vasundara Nilaya , Subhashnagar, Arsikare-573103 & Mr. S. Jagadeesh, Aged about 74 Years, Residing at #712, 1st floor, 25th main, J.P. Nagar 6th phase, Bangalore 560078, being the absolute owners of the below mentioned Schedule Property, hereby state that the said property was acquired through Sale Deed dated 27.02.2002, vide Document No.15590/2001-02, registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Kengeri, Bangalore. And Mr. B.G.Shankar has gifted his entire share to his sister Mrs. Indira Jagadeesh w/o Mr. S Jagadeesh, aged about 67 years through a gift deed dated 20.9.2014, vide Document No. 5594/2014-25, registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Jayanagar, Bangalore. My clients intend to sell / transfer the Schedule Property.
Any claim towards the said relevant property, the same should be lodged with the intending party within 7 days from publication of this Notice.
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All that piece and parcel of the immovable house property bearing No.712 situated at 25th Main Road, 6th Phase, J.P. Nagar, Bangalore , new PID No.7179779451, BBMP new Ward No.178, Sarakki, Bangalore measuring East to West 40 Feet and North to South 30 Feet, in all measuring 1200 Sq.Ft., consisting of ground and first floor and second floor building constructed there on and bounded on: East by : Property No.720; West by : Road; North by : Property No.711; South by : Property No.713.
B.M. Nagaraja, Advocate,
M.R.N. Associates, No.1, 10th Cross, Cubbonpet, Bangalore-560 002.
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Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Jyoti Tejannavar W/o Kiran Vakkund, residing at Plot No. 131, Ramteerth Nagar, Belgaum District, Karnataka - 590016, have changed my name to JYOTI BHOOPAL TEJANNAVAR vide affidavit dated 27-02-2026 before notary Deepa M, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called JYOTI BHOOPAL TEJANNAVAR only

CHANGE OF NAME
We, LINGEGOWDA H S & SMT. LATHA M, residing at # 142, 1st Cross, SLV Kalyana Mantapa, Hemmigepura, Kengeri, Benglauru-560060, have changed my minor son's name from THASHVIN GOWDA H L to VIRAAN ACHYUTH L vide affidavit dated 25-02-2026 before notary Onkarappa N R Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Deeparani B N, residing at # 39/3, Masidi Road, Kuppagadde Village, Soraba Taluk, Shimoga District, Karnataka-577429, have changed my name to DEEPA B N vide affidavit dated 23-02-2026 before notary B R Kambegowda, Hassan. Henceforth I shall be called DEEPA B N only

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JUSTICE SAURABH BANERJEE
Delhi High Court

"Some application of mind has to be there. If there is no application of mind, the order has to be stayed. Where is reasoning in this order? You see page one. Turn over the page. Where is reasoning or finding?

Shirtless protest case: HC restores bail to IYC chief

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Delhi High Court on Monday put on hold an order by an additional sessions judge who stayed the order granting bail to Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Uday Bhanu Chib in connection with the shirtless protest at the February 16-20 AI summit in Delhi.

Uday Bhanu Chib

A bench of Justice Saurabh Banerjee stayed the order passed by the additional sessions judge on February 28 and revived the order of bail granted by the duty magistrate on the same day.

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for Chib, submitted that the additional sessions judge, while passing the order, had misinterpreted the 2024 Supreme Court judgment in Parvinder Singh Khurana vs the Enforcement Directorate.

He also submitted that the finding rendered by the magistrate in the order was in a bail application moved by the applicant.

Since the said order was interlocutory in nature, no revision under Section 438 of the BNSS was maintainable before the sessions court, he said.

The state counsel submitted that the additional sessions judge had not decided the matter finally, and only an ex parte interim order of stay had been granted during the pendency of the proceedings before it.

The matter has been posted for further consideration on March 6, he said.

Relying upon the Parvinder Singh Khurana case, the counsel submitted that any ex parte interim order of stay passed by a court of law need not have specific reasons.

India, Canada launch negotiations for free trade pact

Aim to increase bilateral trade to $50 billion by 2030

NEW DELHI, PTI

India and Canada have launched negotiations for a free trade agreement and look to finalise the pact soon, an official statement said on Monday.

The pact is officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and the negotiations would cover trade in goods, services and other mutually agreed policy areas.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the agreement were signed by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and his Canadian counterpart Maninder Sidhu. It was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada at Hyderabad House.

"India and Canada launched negotiations for the CEPA today in New Delhi and decided to finalise it soon," the commerce ministry said.

The ToR of negotiations will provide format, frequency, and approach to the CEPA negotiations. It will serve as a guide to facilitate negotiations in order to conclude an ambitious, balanced and mutually beneficial pact.

The launch marks the resumption of negotiations, as the two countries had earlier engaged in a similar exercise, but Canada paused it in 2023. Now they decided to resume talks from the beginning as a lot has changed on the global trade front during these two years.

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal, Canada ministers Maninder Sidhu and Anita Anand and others during a joint press meet in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

The negotiations are important as the two sides have fixed a target to increase the bilateral trade to $50 billion by 2030. At present, it stood at $8.66 billion in 2024-25 ($4.22 billion exports and $4.44 billion imports).

Canada represents a market of 41.65 million people (2025) and a GDP of $2.34 trillion at purchasing power parity.

Key exports from India to Canada include pharmaceuticals, iron and steel, seafood, cotton garments, electronic goods and chemicals, among others. Key imports include pulses, pearls and semi-precious stones, coal, fertiliser, paper and petroleum crude.

India's main services sector exports include telecommunications, computer and information services, and other business services.

"These sectors hold significant future growth potential and are expected to expand further following the conclusion of the CEPA," it said.

Canada is also home to over 4,25,000 Indian students and a strong Indian community.

Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce, Brij Mohan Mishra, is the chief negotiator from the Indian side. Bruce Christie is Canada's chief negotiator.

India rejects links to transnational violence in Canada

NEW DELHI, PTI

India on Monday categorically rejected allegations of its links to transnational violence or organised crime in Canada after a fresh media report in that country sought to connect Indian officials to the killing of Sikh extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Canadian national-security officials were presented with evidence that Indian consular staff operating in Vancouver supplied information to assist in the assassination of Nijjar, The Globe and Mail reported quoting two unnamed sources.

India has been trashing Canada's allegations of an Indian link to the killing of the Sikh extremist in 2023.

The Canadian newspaper also named the Indian official while quoting sources.

The report came on a day the prime ministers of Canada and India held wide-ranging talks that focused on significantly expanding the bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, energy, critical minerals, defence and security.

Interestingly, a Canadian readout on the talks between the two prime ministers noted that PM Mark Carney underscored that Canada will continue to take measures to combat transnational repression.

"India categorically rejects allegations of involvement in transnational violence or organised crime. These claims are baseless, politically motivated and unsupported by credible evidence despite repeated requests," Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs P Kumaran said at a media briefing.

P KUMARAN
MEA secretary (East)

"India believes that concerns of this nature must addressed through credible law enforcement and judicial processes and not through public or politicised narratives.

He was responding to questions on the Canadian media report on the Nijjar killing as well as on Carney's remarks.

He said the criminal investigation into the Nijjar case is proceeding as per established legal procedures.

"On completion of this stage, it will move to a full jury trial stage, etc.

Canadians have an established legal procedure and it will proceed as per that procedure. India consistently maintained its commitment to the judicial process," he said.

"We believe that sensitive matters under judicial considerations are best allowed to proceed through established legal processes without public commentary," Kumaran said.

Mamata alleges 'EC-BJP nexus' behind voter roll deletions in Bengal

Asserts she will emerge victorious in Assembly polls

KOLKATA, PTI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday alleged an "EC-BJP nexus" behind the deletion of 63.66 lakh names from the state's electoral rolls following the SIR, claiming that the exercise was designed to help the saffron party ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls.

In her first reaction since the publication of the final post-SIR rolls on February 28, the TMC supremo termed the deletions "deliberate and inhumane," asserting that genuine voters were being struck off because the BJP "cannot win elections on its own merit".

The CM also declared that she would emerge victorious in her Assembly constituency, Bhabanipur, notwithstanding the deletions, and "even if there is one vote left".

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee performs 'dandiya' as she takes part in the 'Holi Milan Samaroh', in Kolkata, on Monday. PTI

"These deletions in voter rolls due to SIR have been done deliberately by the BJP and the EC. The EC has deliberately deleted genuine voters," she said at a Holi programme here.

The post-SIR rolls recorded 63.66 lakh deletions, about 8.3% of the electorate, reducing the voter base to a little over 7.04 crore. In addition, more than 60.06 lakh voters have been placed in the "under adjudication" category, subject to scrutiny in the coming weeks, marking one of the most sweeping electoral revisions in the state since 2002.

With the state heading into a fiercely contested election likely in April, the scale of the revision has injected fresh volatility into Bengal's political battlefield, sharpening the narrative war between the ruling Trinamool Congress and the BJP.

At the heart of the controversy lies Bhabanipur, widely regarded as Mamata's pocket borough and the constituency she represents in the Assembly.

Mamata claimed that "massive deletions" had taken place in her seat but declared she would prevail regardless.

"Bhabanipur is a small constituency. There were only about 2.6 lakh voters. Earlier, 44,000 were excluded. This time, 14,000 more were placed 'under adjudication', and also around 2,000 because of so-called logistical discrepancies. Where are these voters? Why are they missing?

"Despite massive deletions in my Bhabanipur constituency of nearly 60,000 voters, I will win," she asserted.

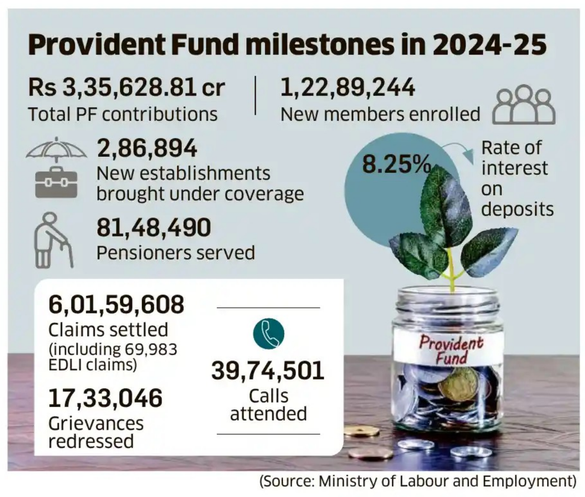
Official figures, however, show that Bhabanipur had 2.06 lakh voters when the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process began on November 4 last year. The draft roll published on December 16 reflected 44,786 deletions.

Will remove infiltrators if voted to power: Shah in Bengal

MATHURAPUR (WB), PTI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday sharpened the BJP's "infiltration" pitch, declaring that while "only names are being deleted now" from West Bengal's electoral rolls under the SIR, the infiltrators would be "removed from the state" once the party comes to power, raising the stakes ahead of the Assembly polls.

Launching the BJP's 'Poriborton Yatra' from Mathurapur in South 24 Parganas, Shah slammed the TMC government over what he described as years of unchecked infiltration under Chief Minister Mamata's watch, signalling that border security and citizenship will anchor the BJP's final electoral push.

"Right now, only names are being deleted from voter rolls, and Mamata Didi is nervous. Once BJP forms the government, we will identify and remove every infiltrator from Bengal," the BJP leader said.



(Source: Ministry of Labour and Employment)

Provident Fund body retains 8.25% interest for 2025-26

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Monday fixed the interest on provident fund deposits for 2025-26 at 8.25%, retaining the rate for the second consecutive year.

The interest rate would be officially notified by the Ministry of Finance, following which EPFO would credit it into the subscribers' accounts. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Central Board of Trustees of the EPFO, chaired by Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

"After due deliberations, the CBT recommended 8.25% annual rate of interest to be credited on EPF accumulations in members' accounts for the financial year 2025-26," an official statement said.

Despite global uncertaintiwes, it said, the EPFO has maintained strong financial discipline, ensuring stable and competitive returns without straining the interest account.

"The decision benefits crores of workers by strengthening their retirement security, while reaffirming EPFO's commitment to safeguarding contributions and delivering prudent, sustainable, and attractive returns compared to other similar investment avenues," it said.

EPFO has been able to declare an interest rate of above 8% for the past several years owing to good returns given by ETF and other investments. The decision reflects the strong credit profile of EPFO's investment portfolio and its sustained ability to deliver competitive returns to its members, it added.

In 2024-25, the EPFO had increased the interest rate marginally to 8.25% from 8.15% in 2022-23.

It had lowered the interest on post-retirement deposits for 2021-22 to an over four-decade low of 8.10%—the lowest since 1977-78, when the rate stood at 8%—from 8.5% in 2020-21.

SC flags trial court's use of AI-generated fake verdicts

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court has taken exception to the trial court's use of AI-generated non-existent and fake judgments to adjudicate a dispute, saying this would not be treated as an error in decision-making but as misconduct, with legal consequences.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe decided to examine the larger issue of the misuse of AI in legal proceedings in a detailed manner, after being informed about the use of non-existent Supreme Court judgments by a trial court in a civil dispute.

"We take cognizance of the Trial Court deploying AI generated non-existing, fake or synthetic alleged judgments and seek to examine its consequences and accountability as it has a direct bearing on the integrity of adjudicatory process. At the outset, we must declare that a decision based on such non-existent and fake alleged judgments is not an error in the decision-making. It would be a misconduct, and legal consequences shall follow. It is compelling that we examine this issue in more detail," the bench said.

The top court was dealing with a plea by Gunmadi Usha Rani and another against the Andhra Pradesh High Court's order of January 21, 2026.

Raghav Chadha's absence at AAP events sparks buzz

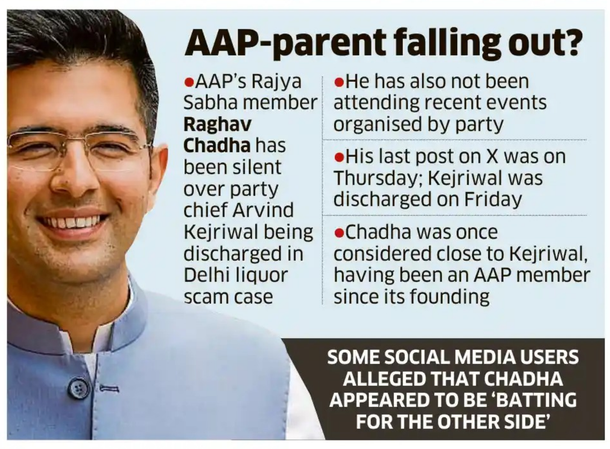
SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Rajya Sabha member and AAP leader Raghav Chadha's radio silence over party chief Arvind Kejriwal getting court relief on Friday in the Delhi liquor scam case and his absence at a rally to celebrate the development have set tongues wagging over why he is staying away from party affairs.

While the court discharged Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and others in the liquor scam case on Friday, Chadha has so far not made any public statement or posted on social media about the development, much to the surprise of party supporters.

He was also not present at the party office on Friday when Kejriwal reached there to address reporters, or at Jantar Mantar, where the party had organised a "jan sabha" addressed by Kejriwal, where the former Delhi chief minister launched a scathing attack on the ruling BJP, claiming that its days were numbered.

The last time Chadha posted on X was at 12.37 pm on Thursday: It was a video clip of one of his Parliament interventions.


AAP-parent falling out?
•AAP's Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha has been silent over party chief Arvind Kejriwal being discharged in Delhi liquor scam case
•He has also not been attending recent events organised by party
•His last post on X was on Thursday; Kejriwal was discharged on Friday
•Chadha was once considered close to Kejriwal, having been an AAP member since its founding
SOME SOCIAL MEDIA USERS ALLEGED THAT CHADHA APPEARED TO BE 'BATTING FOR THE OTHER SIDE'

Similar is the case with Swati Maliwal, another Rajya Sabha member, who had fallen out with Kejriwal after an episode of alleged manhandling of her at the AAP chief's residence by his aide. Maliwal has not been cooperating with the AAP since the incident.

Several social media users have criticised Chadha for his silence on Kejriwal's discharge, with some even hinting that he might be looking at other political options.

Chadha could not be reached for his comments. An AAP functionary said he was giving time to his family.

Some social media users also alleged that he appeared to be "batting for the other side", besides calling him "ungrateful".

This is not the first time Chadha's absence has rankled. When Kejriwal was arrested in 2024 ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Chadha was not quick enough to condemn it on social media, claiming that he was recuperating in the United Kingdom after eye surgery.

UNITY ON A PLATE

Sindhi bizmen dish out iftar meals at Chennai mosque

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Every evening during the holy month of Ramzan, about 50 to 60 men unload buckets of food from a truck and serve them to those breaking their day-long fast at the 200-year-old Walajah Big Mosque in the heart of Chennai.

The men, who are businessmen in various parts of the city, are Sindhis who follow the Hindu faith and are originally from present-day Pakistan, illustrating a classic case of religious harmony and coexistence.

Sufidar Trust in Mylapore has been serving all-vegetarian evening meals to 1,000 to 1,100 people observing the fast during Ramzan for the past 40 years.

The seven-to-eight-course meals, which include vegetable biryani, varieties of rice, saffron-infused milk, fresh fruits and dates, are prepared at the Sufidar temple premises. Cooking starts around 7.30 am and the dishes are brought to the mosque in the evening.

Keeping a 40-year tradition alive, Sindhis serve food to fasting Muslims at Walajah Big Mosque.
DH PHOTO

"Our guru, Dada Ratanchandji, always believed that service to mankind is service to God. We have continued this tradition for the last 40 years, providing meals to those breaking their fast at the Big Mosque on all 30 days during the month of Ramzan," Ashok Khubchandani, senior Sevadari of the Sufi Dar Trust, told *DH*.

Dada Ratanchandji established the Sufi Dar Trust in 1970, inspired by his deep interest in Sufism.

"I have not missed even one year of iftar ever since I migrated to Chennai 50 years ago. This is a tradition that we take pride in. The people who serve here are Sindhi businessmen with enterprises across the city. They come here every day without fail," he added.

All the businessmen wear skullcaps while serving food as a mark of respect, offering yet another example of religious harmony. It's not only those breaking their Ramzan fast who come here, others who feel hungry also walk in to grab a bite.

"We prepare food for 1,000 to 1,200 people every day," Khubchandani added.

The Prince of Arcot, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali, whose family manages the mosque, has said that any food from Sufi Dar Trust is welcome inside the premises.

The Nawab recently said that in a world often marked by division, this enduring tradition stands as a shining example of communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims.

"It is a living reminder that unity is not merely spoken about, but practised through compassion, respect and collective goodwill. This cherished four-decade legacy is not just an act of charity; it is a celebration of India's pluralistic spirit," he added.

Attukal Pongala sends out a 'Kerala Story' of communal harmony

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Attukal Pongala, the annual festival of the Attukal Bhagavathy temple in Thiruvananthapuram, has always been marked by communal harmony. This year, the message is resonating even louder as it coincides with the controversy over the film 'The Kerala Story 2: Goes Beyond'.

It is a familiar sight in Thiruvananthapuram, with mosques, churches and believers from the Muslim and Christian communities opening their premises and extending facilities to lakhs of women who gather around the temple to offer pongala (sweet dishes) to the deity.

This year's festival will be held on March 3, and the state capital is already filled with women who have set up makeshift brick hearths along the streets surrounding the temple, stretching for several kilometres.

A recent message by the Imam of Palayam, VP Suhaib Maulavi, urging mosques and Muslim families to open their premises to Attukal devotees, went viral on social media. Many described it as the real Kerala story, countering alleged communal narratives about the state propagated through films and campaigns driven by vested political interests.

The festival also coincides with the holy month of Ramzan.

The pongala is the major event of the 10-day annual festival of the Bhagavathy temple. The offering takes place on the ninth day of the festival and is considered one of the largest gatherings of women in the world, having also entered the Guinness World Records in 2009.

Devotees from other states and even abroad also participate in the ritual. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, a large number of devotees have also started performing the ritual within their own homes.

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

HPV drive: Prevention and outreach

With the launch of the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccination drive for 14-year-old girls, the Central government has taken an assured step towards eliminating a major health concern for women. Cervical cancer is the second-most common cause of cancer deaths in India, after breast cancer, among women of reproductive age. Globally, HPV vaccination is accepted as an effective countermeasure. India accounts for about 23% of the global burden of cervical cancer, with over 1.2 lakh new cases and about 80,000 deaths reported every year. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide vaccination programme on Saturday in Ajmer, Rajasthan. According to the Union Health Ministry, 14-year-old girls will receive a single dose of the vaccine at government health facilities in all states and Union Territories, ensuring extensive coverage against various types of HPV.

An HPV vaccination programme covering all girls in the early adolescent group has been a long-sought intervention. Some of the states have offered the vaccine, which is available in the market, as part of pilot programmes. However, concerns over cost and logistics have delayed a national rollout. The cost should not be a consideration when the health of millions of women is involved. The argument about logistics is not tenable either because India runs an efficient children's vaccination programme, which is also one of the world's largest. More than 160 countries have made HPV vaccination part of their national health programmes. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended it for all countries.

Nationwide campaign aims to eliminate cervical cancer amid persisting vaccine hesitancy

As part of the campaign, the government plans to make the vaccine available for 1.15 crore girls. It will be administered at primary and community health centres, sub-district and district hospitals, and government medical colleges and hospitals. An awareness programme has been launched, underlining the benefits of vaccination. This is an important intervention in a country where vaccine hesitancy continues to be a concern. India is still grappling with taboos and baseless fears about the potential after-effects of vaccination on fertility, sexual health, etc. These misconceptions and disinformation need to be countered with simple and transparent communication that reaches all sections of society. The programme must include schools to ensure wider reach. The government should aim for 100% coverage and make the programme a continuous exercise. With the right vision and implementation timelines, the HPV vaccination programme can evolve as a major public health initiative that will help to eliminate one of the biggest health threats to women in the country.

Legacy and livelihoods under threat

The Karnataka government's proposal to build a sports stadium on land belonging to the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation Limited (KSIC) is not merely a planning misstep; it risks crippling one of the most successful public sector enterprises. At a time when KSIC is profitable, growing, and globally recognised, the project threatens a serious blow. The immediate fallout is already visible. Over 1,000 employees, including nearly 900 outsourced workers across KSIC's three units, are on strike. Production has been hit; racks in once bustling showrooms are going empty, an alarming sight for a heritage brand whose demand has reached an all-time high. This is not a routine labour protest; it is resistance to an existential threat.

The trigger to the dispute is the proposed acquisition of five acres from KSIC's T Narasipur yarn reeling factory. Undermine this unit, and the downstream weaving centres will starve of raw material. A stadium cannot realistically coexist with a silk factory: the proposed boundary stones sit barely five feet from a boiler; the project would physically block the daily coal transport route; and the Cauvery water pipeline for the factory passes directly through the earmarked site, making construction a logistical impossibility without severing the unit's lifeline. The impact will be severe on more than 550 mature trees, which act as a natural buffer against heat, ash, and noise. What makes the proposal particularly perverse is KSIC's performance. Unlike many state-run textile units that have collapsed under inefficiency, KSIC has thrived. It commands the entire silk value chain – from reeling to weaving – and holds the Geographical Indication tag (GI–11) for Mysore Silk. Net profits have tripled in five years, and the corporation has sustained a compound annual growth rate of about 19%, while saree production has nearly doubled.

Karnataka must not let an ill-advised stadium plan diminish one of its most iconic brands

KSIC's roots run deep. Established in 1912 by Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar, the Mysuru silk factory originally served the royal household and armed forces. Post-Independence, it was taken over by the government, becoming a symbol of Karnataka's pride. To casually erode that legacy is to show contempt for both history and economics. The protesters, backed by opposition leaders and local representatives, have rightly urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to relocate the stadium. Instead of weakening a century-old iconic brand, the government should modernise KSIC by replacing its ageing machinery and increasing capacity. It is the state's duty to safeguard KSIC – an institution that continues to weave prosperity, not merely nostalgia, into every saree.

WAR AND AFTER

The risks and rewards of India's Israel tilt

With Iran under attack, India's deepening ties with Israel may complicate its diplomatic balancing act in West Asia

PARUL CHANDRA

Just two days after the India-Israel clinch got tighter during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit there last week, with the two sides announcing the elevation of their ties to a 'Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity', Israel and the United States unleashed wide-ranging military strikes on Iran, including the targeted killing of its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The PM's visit could not have been more ill-timed, coming as it did just as US President Donald Trump was mobilising forces to attack Iran. This begs the question: Why was such an outreach so urgent, unless Modi intended to personally counsel his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu towards dialogue and regional stability?

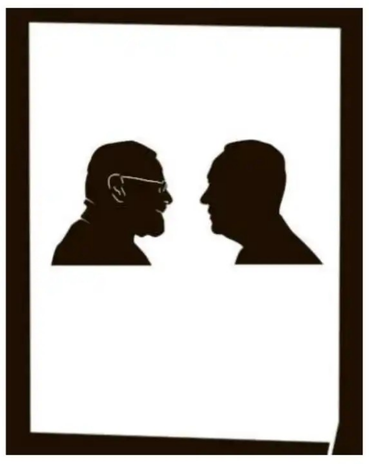
If Modi did indeed offer such counsel, it was swiftly disregarded by the February 28 strikes on Iran. It remains unclear whether Tel Aviv shared its offensive plans with New Delhi or kept its partner in the dark despite proclamations of a relationship built on trust and strategic convergence. Either way, India is left in a difficult diplomatic position as it grapples with the fallout of the conflict now engulfing West Asia.

Predictably, given its strategic embrace of Israel, India has not criticised the military strikes on Iran. Western nations, too, have chosen a similar path. Instead, New Delhi has called for restraint, advocating diplomacy and the respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. Yet, the region remains a powder keg for now, with Iran launching retaliatory strikes on US military bases and regional allies.

For India, the second military strike against Iran by Israel in the last eight months carries serious ramifications for its strategic interests in its "extended neighbourhood". The region is a cornerstone of India's energy security, a growing hub for trade, and home to an estimated 8.9 million-strong diaspora whose remittances are vital to the Indian economy.

Furthermore, the turmoil will queer the pitch for India's diplomacy and strategic interests as the Arab world navigates the conflict and its nations take sides depending on their own imperatives. The crisis will test India's ability to protect its interests *vis-à-vis* the US without allowing its improving ties with the Trump administration to become a casualty.

India thus far had managed to balance relations with Iran – historically a close friend – even as it pursued close ties with Israel. Even though India was forced to cease all oil imports from Iran some years ago and, more recently, put on hold the development of the Iranian Chabahar port for fear of inviting US sanctions, Tehran seemed to understand



India's constraints. However, the current conflict, coupled with India's marked strategic pivot towards Israel, may throw Tehran's ties with New Delhi off-kilter.

There is also a growing perception that India's support for the Palestinian cause is no longer steadfast, which was evident again during the PM's visit to Israel. While India repeatedly reaffirms its commitment to a "negotiated two-state solution towards the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine" and continues its humanitarian assistance for Palestinians, both bilaterally and through the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), these actions seem secondary to offset its primary tilt towards Israel.

A selective condemnation

This shift is driven by realpolitik and an ideological affinity that Indian Hindutva proponents have had with Israel. The shared majoritarian leanings of both right-wing governments have propelled the strategic embrace.

During his address to the Knesset, PM Modi emphasised that the two nations are "ancient civilisations" with "philosophical parallels", even drawing comparisons between Jewish and Hindu festivals to underscore a deep-rooted cultural connection.

While New Delhi views a robust relationship with Tel Aviv as a strategic necessity, its diluted support for Palestine diminishes its moral standing and complicates its outreach to the Arab world.

India clearly sees major gains in boosting ties with Israel despite the latter having faced international opprobrium and isolation after its clearly disproportionate strikes on Gaza following the Hamas terror attacks on October 7, 2023.

While India has rightly condemned the Hamas terror attacks, with Modi emotionally saying, "we feel your pain... India stands with Israel firmly" during his Knesset address, there has been no similar outpouring of solidarity for the over 70,000 Gazans killed in the aftermath.

Amid the hosannas surrounding Modi's visit, Palestine at best was a side-show for New Delhi despite its reaffirmation of support for the Gaza Peace Plan, which it believes "holds the promise of a just and durable peace" in the region and in addressing the Palestinian question.

Modi's visit to Israel will no doubt impart further momentum and depth to bilateral ties amid the shared resolve to cooperate in diverse domains. While the expansive defence and security ties have been the lynchpin, and agriculture is also an important area of cooperation, the two nations are now also looking to boost bilateral trade and investment as well as collaboration in sectors such as critical and emerging technologies, AI, and semiconductors.

They also want to boost regional connectivity initiatives such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the four-nation grouping of India, Israel, the US and the UAE (I2U2) to boost economic cooperation, among other things. India, however, must ensure that its ever-tightening clinch with Israel does not jeopardise its broader strategic interests in the volatile West Asia region.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

A journey into Ubuntu

In simple words, the cab driver unknowingly captured a profound African philosophy

SRIPRIYA SATISH

I was recently travelling from Chennai to Bengaluru in a drop taxi. What I expected to be a long, monotonous, and tiring journey turned, surprisingly, into a beautiful revelation. Travel often carries its weariness. The rush of highways, unfamiliar faces and the constant hum of traffic can drain our energy. Yet this journey stood out for one simple reason: the person behind the wheel.

The young taxi driver was unlike many drivers who, burdened by the pressures of a demanding profession, can appear irritable and impatient. He was remarkably patient, soft-spoken and cheerful. A friendly conversation unfolded naturally, and the hours seemed to glide by.

As we spoke, he shared his life story with disarming openness. He had lost both parents at a very young age and had been raised by his grandparents. When he spoke of them, his voice was filled with warmth and gratitude. They had showered him with care, values and emotional strength — gifts that shaped who he had become. Though his job meant long hours on the road and constant fatigue, he said with a smile that he still felt blessed and chose to see the positive side of life.

His work, he explained, gave him the opportunity to meet diverse people every day. Each passenger, according to him, taught him something new — a different perspective and new lessons about life.

I was moved by the maturity of his thoughts. He credited his patience, humility, and God-fearing nature to the loving upbringing of his grandparents. "I am who I am because of them," he said sincerely. Then, with a shy smile, he added, "And I am also here because of people like you — my customers."

That simple statement struck me deeply. In just a few words, he unknowingly expressed the essence of a timeless African philosophy — Ubuntu. Ubuntu translates roughly as "I am because we are." It reminds us that our identity is shaped not merely by personal achievement but by the relationships and human connections that nurture us. We thrive because others contribute to our growth, support us, guide us, and stand by us. The philosophy recognises that every human life is interconnected.

We are not solitary beings walking alone; we are bound by invisible threads of compassion, kindness, and mutual dependence.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed a similar sentiment when he spoke about the importance of the customer:

"A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us; we are dependent on him. He is not an interruption to our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so."

Ubuntu is not limited to business; it is a way of living. A perspective that recognises the inherent dignity in every individual we encounter—a concept to be etched in gold.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The West Asian crisis has far-reaching consequences

The escalating conflict between the US, Israel, and Iran has far-reaching consequences for countries not directly involved. The war's impact is felt across West Asia, with neutral nations' citizens caught in the crossfire. It is crucial to question the morality of making these countries suffer for a conflict not of their making. The US Congress must rein in its President's aggressive actions, which defy international institutions and threaten global stability. When will the US Congress come alive to protect the interests of future generations and restrain their president from brazenly defying the Constitution at every turn, declaring war under a different name, and challenging every known international institution setup?
T C Narayan, Bengaluru

Prioritise diplomacy

This refers to 'Imperialist terror unleashed on Iran' (Mar 2). The joint military operation by Israel and the US has made the Middle East a conflict zone, with Iran vowing to retaliate. While Ayatollah Khamenei's rule was oppressive, foreign intervention is not the solution. The US can't pick and choose which autocrats to topple; this sets a dangerous precedent. The question remains: will the US attempt regime change in other autocratic nations like Russia, North Korea, or China? The international community must prioritise diplomacy over force.
K R Jayaprakash Rao, Mysuru

Ensure justice

Apropos 'Govt jobs: Madiga leaders to urge CM to resolve quota knot' (Mar 2), the state government should consider internal reservation for Madigas within the existing 15% quota for SCs in public employment. Data show that a few relatively advanced sub-castes have captured a disproportionate share of jobs, while Madiga families remain trapped in low-paid, insecure occupations. Reservation was meant to correct historical exclusion, not reproduce inequality within a protected category. Sub-categorisation would promote equitable distribution, social justice and genuine representation without reducing anyone's overall entitlement. A transparent policy with independent review can ensure fair access to state jobs and restore confidence in the reservation system.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Change means securing our borders. Change means ending corruption in jobs (in Bengal). Change means safety for mothers and sisters. Change means rule of law.
Amit Shah, Union Home Minister

A man says a lot of things in summer he doesn't mean in winter.
Patricia Briggs

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Digital curfews: Mentor, don't ban

Blanket prohibitions carry intent, but real solutions are in building digital literacy and safer platform design

JEHOSH PAUL

In a move reflecting growing global anxiety over the 'TikTok brain', the Karnataka government is mulling a blanket ban on mobile phone use for minors under 16 due to parental concerns about social media addiction among children. The concerns driving this proposal are undeniably valid and are backed by recent national data. The ASER 2024 report found that 76% of children aged 14-16 use smartphones for social media, while India's Economic Survey 2025-26 identified digital addiction among children and youth as a growing concern, linking excessive use to reduced focus, sleep disruption, and weaker academic performance.

There is a scientific basis for this. Neuroscientific research has consistently shown that the prefrontal cortex, which governs impulse control and judgment, continues to mature through adolescence. At the same time, digital platforms are designed around persuasive features such as infinite scroll and variable rewards that can intensify compulsive use.

These concerns justify intervention, but they also demand the right kind of intervention. A blanket ban may reduce exposure temporarily, yet it leaves unanswered the deeper question of how young people develop the digital judgment and self-regulation required of responsible citizens.

A blanket ban assumes that age 16 is a magical threshold where responsibility suddenly appears. In reality, responsibility is a muscle, not a switch. If a child is cut off from the digital world until age 16, that child may enter digital spaces with less familiarity, weaker experiential judgment, and fewer internalised habits of self-regulation. The absence of gradual exposure may leave young people less prepared to identify misinformation, respond to cyberbullying, and moderate their own consumption.

Furthermore, the socio-economic reality of Karnataka makes the risks of a blanket ban more uneven than they first appear. The ASER 2024 report also found that 57% of children aged 14-16 used a smartphone for an educational activity, which underlines how phones are already part of the learning ecosystem for many adolescents. That dependence is often sharper in rural settings, where, as experts have pointed out, many students rely primarily on mobile phones to access digital content, while children in better-resourced urban homes may have laptops or tablets. The burdens of a blanket ban are therefore unlikely to be distributed equally, and even a well-intentioned ban can widen existing inequalities in access to education and in how children are prepared for a digital society.

Safeguards and civics

Even if the government were to consider a direct social media ban, the state would confront both legal and practical constraints. Legislative competence to regulate the internet and communication infrastructure rests with the Union. Moreover, attempted restrictions remain inherently fragile. Digitally savvy users can readily bypass barriers through Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) or false age declarations. Australia's recent social media ban has likewise drawn attention to persistent challenges of implementation, age assurance, and platform compliance.

Therefore, instead of a digital curfew, the state should pursue a harder and more effective path by combining digital literacy in schools with advocacy for safer platform design and limited age-calibrated exposure. First, the policy focus must shift from the minors to the digital ecosystem itself. Karnataka can play an important role by advocating for stronger national safeguards that limit addictive algorithmic features for minors and encourage age-appropriate design. Such measures align with the spirit of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, which recognises children as a protected class.

Second, the government must integrate digital hygiene into the state's school curriculum. Just as civics explains how democracy works, digital civics should explain how the internet works. Students need to learn how to spot rage-bait, verify deepfakes, and understand that their attention and data are valuable commodities. This kind of training is not only about adolescent well-being, but also about building habits of verification, restraint, and scepticism early to build long-term resilience in a country where online scams, misinformation, and financial fraud increasingly target older adults.

The current *status quo*, where minors have unrestricted access to some of the most addictive algorithms, is unsustainable. But prohibition is a blunt instrument; it may delay exposure, but it cannot build judgment. Critical thinking, self-regulation, and digital literacy can protect children long after any curfew ends. A responsible citizen is someone who knows how to use the internet without losing oneself in the process.

For a state shaped by the digital economy, the stronger legacy will lie not in banning technology for minors, but in teaching them how to use it responsibly.

(The writer is a lawyer and development consultant)

From 'we the people' to knowing the Constitution

SUNDAR ATHREYA H AND SOUMYA MOHAPATRA

The Indian Constitution begins with the iconic phrase 'we the people'. The phrase reflects the democratic nature of the country and the power bestowed on its citizens. India's 'we the people', however, are not a homogeneous category but a heterogeneous, plural population that speaks many languages, follows many religions and belongs to diverse economic backgrounds, sects and communities, each with its distinct style of life. The Constitution had the task of chiselling the nation. How far has it secured these rights, and more importantly, how much constitutional literacy has it achieved? This is a question that is worth pondering.

Seventy-six years ago, the founding members had the daunting task of preparing a Constitution that would unify the princely states and provinces into a single, territorially bound country and safeguard the rights of all its citizens equally. The drafting process did not emerge from a vacuum; inspiration was drawn from various other constitutions. However, the political and economic setup of these countries was vastly different from the Indian context.

The Constituent Assembly bequeathed the responsibility of implementing the ideals of the Constitution to the future Parliament and the courts. The nascent days of Indian democracy saw clashes of ideologies, especially between the fundamental rights of the individual and the collective rights of the people. The Constitution had the task of securing the individual economic and ownership rights of the citizens; at the same time, it had to implement social welfare provisions that would benefit society collectively. To a fair extent, the Constitution is malleable and ductile.

It has seen 106 amendments and countless landmark judgments to reach its present shape and form. At times, the amendments have altered the core identity of the Constitution; at other times, they have also strived to expand the rights it guarantees. Many of the newer additions were possible, thanks to the intervention of the courts at important junctures. In that sense, the Constitution is not a stagnant document but a living and breathing document. The Constitution houses several rights which were not part of the original document that was adopted seventy-six years ago. But the bigger question is how much of the Constitution has been integrated into the day-to-day lives of its citizens.

There have been several critiques against the Indian Constitution, but the primary criticism is that it was written in a language which was not understood by many of the citizens whom it intends to protect. The original document was drafted only in English and in Hindi. This criticism is valid even today, as a majority of the population fail to understand the rights and obligations that are enshrined in the Constitution. Although measures have been taken to print it in all its twenty-two official languages, it has not yet achieved the success of increasing the awareness about it to its citizens.

Further, the Constitution is criticised as a lawyer-made document. The majority of its makers were lawyers. Even the books that elucidate the Constitution are written by lawyers peppered with judicial decisions and maxims. This has acted as a barrier for a non-lawyer to understand the Constitution. The document is not meant to be understood only by the judges of the topmost court but also by the common man without judicial training. The awareness about the Constitution has not gained inroads into the life of the common man yet.

When citizens are not aware of the rights and obligations guaranteed by the Constitution, they are left without any meaningful protection. This reduces the major ideals of the Constitution, such as 'liberty' and 'equality', to abstract concepts that are discussed within the hallowed court halls by the educated few in society. The values that nourish the Constitution ought to have become common knowledge by now; this applies to both the intellectual and the common man of the country.

The Constitution has attempted to study the problem of minorities in India and has attempted to safeguard their rights, yet the worrisome situation is several linguistic and economically underprivileged citizens are not yet aware of the rights that are secured in the Constitution. This is not merely an economic problem within the society, but it is a social issue that continues to exist in the country.

Eugen Ehrich in the early twentieth century wrote the living law theory, which states that the law's true centre of gravity is not in the statute books but in the customs and practises followed by the members of the society through non-state institutions such as family and businesses. People live their lives by certain social rules of conduct which they recognise as binding. He describes it as the 'inner order of association'. Ehrlich argues that in order to be effective, there needs to be consistency between living law and juristic law. And this cannot be a top-down exercise but a process that involves the collaborative association of ordinary people.

The Constitution of India is a result of different groups—both mainstream and vulnerable—making their voices heard in laying the foundational principles that would govern the country. In India, the values enshrined in the Constitution are yet to penetrate the non-State institutions across the country equally. Being uninformed about the constitutional principles only serves to weaken democracy, and this asymmetrical difference has to be bridged.

(The writers are assistant professors at KIIT School of Law)

A badly weakened Iran will no longer intimidate or threaten its neighbours in the same way. The regional impact could be comparable to the collapse of the Soviet Union

STEVEN ERLANGER

A man holds a portrait of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as people mourn his killing at a rally in Tehran, Iran, on Sunday, a day after he was killed in coordinated US and Israeli airstrikes. NYT

Iran's regime may survive, but Middle East will be changed

Iran's supreme leader may be dead, but there will be another. Its slain military commanders will be replaced. A governing system created over 47 years will not easily disintegrate under air power alone. Iran retains the capacity to strike back against US and Israeli airstrikes, and the war's trajectory is unclear.

But the Islamic Republic, already weakened and unpopular, is now further diminished, its power at home and in the region at one of its lowest ebbs since its leaders took power during the revolution that overthrew Iran's American-backed shah in 1978-79.

Even if the regime does not fall, which remains the stated aim of President Donald Trump, this massive attack is likely to have strategic consequences in the Middle East comparable to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader killed Saturday morning, maintained a visceral antagonism towards Israel and the United States, which he consistently called "the Great Satan." He built and financed a regional set of proxy militias that surrounded Israel and shared his hatred of it. Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the Houthis in Yemen —all served both to attack Israeli interests and protect Iran itself.

Iran built up its missile programme and enriched uranium to nearly bomb-grade, even as it denied ever wanting a bomb. It became a regional power so strong that Sunni leaders in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Persian Gulf sought to keep good ties with a Shia Islamic regime that also threatened them.

Iran's decline began two years ago, with Israel's tough and sustained response to an invasion by Hamas from Gaza. It accelerated when Israel eroded Iran's air defences, defeated Hezbollah and profited from the Syrian revolution that overthrew Bashar Assad, another ally of Iran.

But now, with the ayatollah's death and intense destruction from the air, Iran's regional sway has ebbed further, with uncertain consequences that will play out over months and even years.

"The Islamic Republic as we know it will not survive this," said Sanam Vakil, director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House, a London-based research group.

"The Mideast won't be the same again," she said. "For 47 years the Mideast has been living with a hostile regime and a destabilising force that it has tried to first isolate and then manage."

Now, she said, the regime might be dismantled, and something new and different might emerge. That leadership may turn out to be even less friendly to Washington, particularly if dominated by Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

Whoever takes charge, Iran will be badly weakened in the medium term, more inward-looking, and focused on political competition, internal security and economic chaos, Vakil said.

In the coming days, however, Iran may spread more short-term chaos as its current leadership tries to bring an end to the war while saving the regime.

Iran will try to rapidly increase the cost for Israel, the United States and its Gulf allies "to force them to back down before this succeeds in destabilising the regime," said Ellie Geranmayeh, deputy head of the Middle East and North Africa programme at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Increasing its attacks on Arab countries in the Gulf is risky but may be Iran's best chance to shorten the war — since it could prompt the Arab world to pressure the US and Israel to end their campaign.

"Iran's aim now is to absorb US and Israeli attacks, hold its position and signal expansion of war, and wait for worried regional actors to mediate a ceasefire," said Vali Nasr, an Iran expert at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, on social media. "They expect that if Trump does not get a quick win then he will look for an exit, and negotiations afterwards will be different."

Iran's proxies across the Mideast could also come to Iran's defence, increasing the price of an extended war, according to Ali Vaez, Iran project director for the International Crisis Group, a research institution.

"If Hezbollah fully engages from Lebanon, if militias strike US bases in Iraq and Syria, or if the Houthis escalate in the Red Sea, this stops being a bilateral conflict and becomes a regionwide war stretching across the Middle East," Vaez said. A wider war would have considerable longer-term impact on oil prices and inflation, especially if Iran can shut the Strait of Hormuz, a key international shipping route.

But in the longer term, an Iran that is wrapped up in its own domestic problems — trying to avoid elite fragmentation and consolidate a new leadership or even move towards a more consultative one, with less clerical influence and more power sharing — will not have the energy or the resources to meddle in the region. That could open up new opportunities for Lebanon and the Palestinians, as it has already done for the Syrians.

It leaves Israel ascendant, making it even more of an ineradicable fact in the region that the Sunni nations must accommodate. A new and more moderate government could take office in Israel after elections later this year. With Iran defanged, it may feel it has the mandate to build on the ceasefire in Gaza and negotiate seriously with the Palestinians, under pressure from Washington and the Saudis.

Israel itself would prefer regime change, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made clear, but would be content, analysts say, with a divided, broken and chaotic Iran wrapped up in its own problems, like Syria is now.

Presuming there is no revolution, a reconstituted Iranian government must still grapple with a powerful Israel and a United States it cannot trust. The current regime has made nuclear enrichment a key element in its efforts to cement regional power and deterrence. And it has refused to change course, even as that display of persistence seems to have brought it closer to destruction than any other policy, whether that be supporting terrorism abroad or massive repression at home.

It is unclear if even a more moderate government would make new concessions over its nuclear programme under the pressure of war. It is also unclear if any Iranian leader would feel able to trust Trump, who tore up former President Barack Obama's nuclear deal in 2018 and now has bombed Iran twice in the middle of ongoing negotiations. Would Iran deem it necessary to give in on the nuclear issue to survive? Or if a hard-line, more security-dominated government emerges, will it try to race toward a nuclear weapon, more convinced than ever of its need?

Despite the fierce crackdown on Iranian protesters in January that left many thousands dead, Trump continues to encourage the Iranian people to rise up to overthrow the regime.

"Bombs will be dropping everywhere," he said. "When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take."

But it may not go that easily or cleanly, noted Ivo H Daalder, a former US ambassador to NATO.

In February 1991, during the first Gulf War, President George H W Bush issued a similar call to the Iraqi people to rise up and oust Saddam Hussein.

"They did," Daalder noted, "and the US stood by as Saddam's security forces slaughtered them in huge numbers."

Iran's future will not be determined solely by missiles, militias or the ambitions of outsider powers, but by the balance struck within its own fractured elite and its weary society. Airstrikes can shatter infrastructure and decapacitate leadership, but they cannot easily script what comes next. Whether the country lurches towards deeper militarisation, stumbles into prolonged instability or cautiously reshapes its political order, the reverberations will extend far beyond its borders.

The New York Times

Life beyond the grid

SREENATH NAIR

It is not that I couldn't learn Excel. The cells beckoned, formulas blinked like arcane incantations, and macros promised productivity bordering on the divine. But somewhere between the IF and the VLOOKUP, I paused. Something about the spreadsheet—those neat rows and columns, each a little coffin of clarity—that felt like an erasure.

The spreadsheet is not just a tool. It is a worldview. It organises everything—budgets, birthdays, breakups, even morality—into manageable, sortable units. It offers the illusion of control. Beneath that illusion, however, lies a quiet tyranny: the triumph of quantification over intuition, predictability over possibility.

We now live in an era of spreadsheet determinism, where anything that cannot be modelled is treated as unreal. If it cannot be forecast, it is deemed undeserving of existence. For those who do not naturally think in grids and projections, survival itself begins to feel conditional—especially in business environments where modelling is mistaken for intelligence.

I often imagine a novelist submitting a manuscript, only to be told that the work has 'low ROI'. I don't blame Excel for that verdict. I blame the mindset that asks fiction to perform like an asset class.

Futures and options, those glittering derivatives born in the crucible of financial ingenuity, are merely symptoms of this broader malaise. Finance professionals, trained to reduce the world to risk and reward, now occupy positions of disproportionate cultural authority. Their tools quietly become our truths. They speak in volatility curves and Sharpe ratios, and the rest of us are expected to nod, enlightened. But what they model is not life. It is only what can be made legible to a model.

The spreadsheet did not predict the loneliness of remote work. It did not account for the moral fatigue of surviving a pandemic while dashboards tracked 'efficiency'. It could not flag the slow erosion of meaning in lives where the KPIs looked immaculate. These things fall outside the pivot table, and so they are rendered invisible.

To resist the spreadsheet, then, is not to resist order. It is to resist a singular definition of order. We are not anti-logic; we are anti-reductionist.

There is a deeper distortion at play. When finance, Harvard-polished and Morgan-Stanley-endorsed, becomes the default language of transformation, everything else is dismissed as noise. This is how the world's largest food company, Nestlé, ends up with a lower market capitalisation (MCap) than Netflix. Swiggy's algorithm is undoubtedly impressive. But we should hesitate before rating it above the brick-and-mortar enterprises that quietly built the world we inhabit. Market capitalisation, after all, bears no necessary relationship to tangible value, social utility, or productive capacity. When valuations reward quirks in apps more than decades of real investment, one has to ask whether anyone would still choose to build old-style enterprises at all. A fairer valuation grammar may be essential.

And let us also not forget the general welfare that old-time private and public enterprises once extended to their employees and families. It was a fuller cosmology. It included healthcare, schools, living quarters, libraries, and townships that blurred the line between work and community. They were social ecosystems that were imperfect yet enduring. Labour therein was tethered to a sense of continuity and care.

None of this is to deny the virtues of productivity, upskilling, machining, or the necessary pruning of flab. There is value in making enterprises agile, in questioning inefficiencies, and in refusing nostalgia as an excuse for stagnation. But when welfare is dismissed as excess weight on a balance sheet, something essential is lost.

What gets lost in this transition is not merely a set of benefits or structures. It is a way of imagining value itself in life. Now, the humanities are politely sidelined. Psychology is labelled 'soft'. Philosophy becomes an indulgence. Governance, art, climate, and education are handed over to consultants armed with spreadsheets.

But you cannot spreadsheet a forest. Or a friendship. Or a revolution (Bitcoin included).

True transformation does not come from optimising inputs. It comes from the untidy persistence of human will, from failure, contradiction, and empathy. These are not values you can enter into a cell.

And so, I never learnt Excel. Not out of defiance, but as an act of quiet rebellion. It is to remind myself that not all things that count can be counted, and not all things that count need to be.

I remain eternally grateful to my CEO, who once said, without fuss, that I could delegate my Excel work to 'someone else who knows it'. He added that I should rather focus on my strengths than learn Excel.

Thank you, Sir.

(The writer is a journalist-turned-communications professional based in Bengaluru)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: MARCH 1976

PM warns foreign nations to keep off India's affairs

Calcutta, March 2
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today warned the "Eastern and Western nations" not to interfere in the internal affairs of India. "Let me, as the Prime Minister of this country, tell the foreign powers that we will not tolerate interference in our internal affairs," she declared at a mammoth public meeting at the Brigade Parade ground here. "The more they interfere in our internal affairs, the more rigid and determined we will be in dealing with them. We are not answerable to any big or small country of the world," she said.

25 YEARS AGO: MARCH 2001

Centre sells Balco to Sterlite

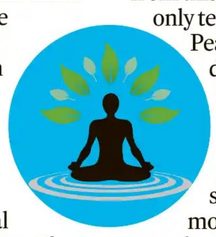
New Delhi, March 2 (PTI)
The Government today sold its 51 per cent stake in public sector Bharat Aluminium Company (Balco) to Sterlite Industries Ltd for Rs 551.5 crore. Sterlite Industries handed over a cheque for Rs 551.5 crore to the government after signing the shareholders and share purchase agreements. The agreements were signed by Aruna Bagchi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Mines, on behalf of the government, S C Tripathi, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines and Chairman and MD Balco on behalf of Balco and Tarun Jain, Director (Finance) for Sterlite Industries.

OASIS | BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ

Inner peace key to global harmony

With the invention of nuclear weapons and their sophisticated means of delivery, the nature of war has now dreadfully changed. As a result of this horrendous development, mankind is, today, faced with the problem of its very survival. In this situation, the question of disarmament, arms delimitation or delegitimisation of war has attained foremost importance.

But, while recognising that the constant threat of a nuclear war poses a grave danger to global peace, it would be wrong to equate peace with mere absence of war. For war is nothing but a manifestation of the motives of violence and destruction or of the ignoble emotions of hate and anger. It is equally true that it is man's mind which is a vast store of divine potentialities also. Wars, it has truly been said, are born in the minds of men, but the seeds of peace also are to be found in man's mind. So, the problem of global peace is, in its real essence, the question of man's mental equanimity and spiritual peace. If man moulds his motives in consonance with the pithy slogan 'Be good and do good', peace will surely return to planet Earth.



Any other effort—diplomatic, political, juristic, etc.—which is divorced from this principle, will attain, at best, only temporary and fragile peace.

Peace, in the real sense, is a divine feeling and is associated with love, unity, enlightenment, fraternal feelings and inner joy. It has its roots in purity of mind. It is not even slightly touched by any ignoble motives or by any one of the "seven deadly sins". The word 'peace', it should, therefore, be remembered, has wider and more subtle connotations than the one which has generally formed the theme for discussions at peace conferences that have been held across the globe for decades.

Most of the modern dictionaries also define 'peace' in terms equivalent to these. But, in truth, peace refers to harmony of man's mind with his intellect, his conscience, his environment and with other beings. Equanimity of mind is an essential characteristic of the state of peace. In yogic parlance, it is the name given to spiritual experience which one gets when one's mind is lovingly linked to God, the Ocean of Peace. It is such a state of mind that spreads vibrations of peace in the world and can find a way to establishing lasting global peace.

WEST ASIA TENSIONS: State governments set up helplines for stranded nationals, families

Centre assures safe return of Indians in Gulf

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

FULLY PREPARED

- Centre says committed to bringing back all Indians safely
- Fully prepared to evacuate those stranded in Gulf region
- Govt in touch with Indian missions abroad

With a large number of Indians stranded in West Asian countries due to airspace restrictions following the Iran conflict, the Centre on Monday said it is in touch with Indian missions in the Gulf region to ensure the safe return of affected nationals.

Several state governments have also set up helplines to assist those stranded and facilitate their return to India.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which met on Sunday night under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, directed all concerned departments to take necessary and feasible measures to support Indian nationals impacted by the developments.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said the Centre is fully prepared to bring back Indians stranded in the Gulf region and is in touch with Indian missions abroad to ensure their safety.

In a statement, Joshi said discussions have been held with senior officials of the embassies concerned to facilitate the safe return of those affected by the war situation.

"Whenever Kannadigas and other Indians face distress anywhere in the world, the central government has ensured their safe return. Earlier, we brought back those stranded in Ukraine. Wherever Indians are, their safety remains our priority," he said.

Reassuring anxious families, the minister said there was no need to panic and that the government is committed to bringing back all Indians safely.

In Andhra Pradesh, NRI Empowerment and Relations Minister K Srinivas said the government has alerted Andhra Pradesh Non-Resident Telugu Society (APNRTS) coordinators in the Gulf region to assist Telugus in distress. Efforts are underway to provide temporary accommodation, security and support in the homes of local Telugu residents.

The APNRTS has advised Telugu expatriates to travel to Muscat in Oman to board repatriation flights to Kochi for their return to India.

The Telangana government on Monday set up a control room at the Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi to assist residents of the state living in crisis-hit West Asia and their family members back home. Senior officials at Telangana Bhavan are in touch with the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian embassies to assess the situation.

In Punjab, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann announced a round-the-clock helpline to assist Punjabis stranded in affected countries.

A passenger is greeted upon arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport after returning from Abu Dhabi, in New Delhi, on Monday. PTI

People from the Muslim community raise slogans amid tear smoke fired by police at a protest over the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in joint air strikes by the US and Israel, after authorities imposed severe restrictions on the movement of people in parts of Kashmir, Srinagar, on Monday. PTI

14 injured in Kashmir protests

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

At least 14 people, including six security personnel, were injured on the second day of protests that erupted across Jammu and Kashmir following the reported killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a joint US-Israeli strike, officials said on Monday.

Authorities imposed sweeping restrictions across the Valley, shut educational institutions, throttled mobile internet speeds and sealed key city centres, saying the measures — which will continue on Tuesday — were aimed at preventing any escalation of tensions.

Reports said eight protesters and six security forces personnel sustained injuries during clashes at a few locations in the Valley. Security personnel had to use mild force to disperse agitating crowds in some areas.

Authorities sealed parts of Srinagar and other district headquarters, deploying police and CRPF personnel in strength to prevent large gatherings. Historic Lal Chowk was barricaded on Sunday night, with concertina wires placed around the Ghanta Ghar clock tower and at key intersections leading into the city centre.

Officials described the measures as precautionary. Severe restrictions were placed on movement in several parts of the Valley, particularly in Shia-dominated areas, against the backdrop of a one-day strike call by Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulama (MMU) chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq.

Officials said 75 rallies were held at various places in the Kashmir Valley, while a few demonstrations were reported from the Jammu region. Demonstrators carried black flags and portraits of Khamenei, raising slogans against the United States and Israel.

While most protests remained largely peaceful, clashes erupted at a few places. Shops in several localities remained shut.

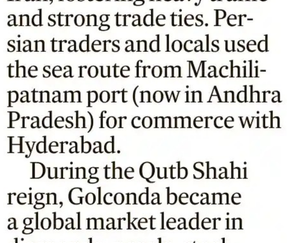
Centre asks states to be alert over pro-Iran protests

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked states to keep an eye on pro-Iran protests in India in the wake of the US–Israel military attack on the West Asian country and remain alert to pro-Iran radical preachers giving inflammatory statements that could provoke violence, officials said on Monday.

In its letter circulated soon after the military escalation on Saturday, the MHA also said that the states should keep a strict vigil on social media activities to ensure that there is no flare-up of emotions.

From culture to cuisine, Hyd bears Iran's imprint

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS



PERSIAN TIES

- City layout credited to Persian architect Mir Momin Astarabadi
- Charminar and monuments showcase Persian design
- Hyderabadi Urdu enriched with Persian vocabulary
- Irani chai & haleem showcase culinary bonds

As West Asia grapples with escalating tensions, Telangana's capital Hyderabad stands as a reminder of enduring ties with Iran, with Persian influence permeating the city's culture, architecture, cuisine and language.

Founded in 1591 by Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah, the fifth Sultan of the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda, who hailed from Iran, the city long attracted Iranian settlers. He belonged to the Persian Shia Muslim Qutb Shahi dynasty that established Hyderabad.

Iconic landmarks such as the Charminar and other historic monuments showcase Persian design, while Persian vocabulary enriches Hyderabadi Urdu. The city's layout, including the Charminar, is widely credited to Persian architect Mir Momin Astarabadi.

Local favourites like Irani chai and haleem reflect this enduring culinary bond. Notably, upscale Banjara Hills features Imam Khomeini Road, named after Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"Qutb Shahis are tribes from Iran. The Bahmani Sultans granted them governorship of the Golconda area, after which they ruled the region. Hyderabad was founded in 1591 to decongest the rapidly growing Golconda. Its name honours Caliph Ali, the fourth Rashidun Caliph of Sunni Muslims and first Imam of Shia Muslims, after his title 'Hyder (The Lion) or Ali Haider (Ali the Lionheart)," historian and honorary managing trustee of The Deccan Heritage Trust, Mohammed Safiullah, told *DH*.

He added that Indo-Persian trade thrived with Hyderabad as the epicentre. Safiullah noted that pre-1947, before independence, India shared a border with Iran, fostering heavy traffic and strong trade ties. Persian traders and locals used the sea route from Machilipatnam port (now in Andhra Pradesh) for commerce with Hyderabad.

During the Qutb Shahi reign, Golconda became a global market leader in diamonds, pearls, steel, arms and printed fabrics. All eight Qutb Shahi sultans patronised learning and were prolific builders, advancing Indo-Persian and Indo-Islamic literature and culture in Hyderabad.

'Self-styled Vishwaguru' will never learn lesson: Cong

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Congress on Monday recalled then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's remarks in the US in 2005, describing the Iraq invasion as a "mistake", and said a government that stands up for its beliefs as well as its people's interests is also one that is respected across the world.

"That's a lesson that the self-styled Vishwaguru will never learn," Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ramesh shared a video clip on X of Singh's remarks made in Washington on July 20, 2005.

"As far as the (US-led) invasion of Iraq is concerned, it was our sincere view that it was a mistake," Singh had said.

In his post on X, Ramesh said, "The PM who was singularly responsible for the India-US nuclear agreement also said this in Washington on July 20, 2005. A government that stands up for its beliefs and its people's interests is also one that is respected across the world."

"That's a lesson that the self-styled Vishwaguru will never learn," he added.

His remarks came as the war in West Asia escalated broadly on Monday.

The Congress on Sunday "unequivocally" condemned the targeted assassination of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and said no external power has the authority to engineer a regime change, as such actions amount to imperialism and are incompatible with a rules-based international order.

Cong's Jalna MP stranded in Dubai

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, PTI: Congress' Jalna Lok Sabha MP Kalyan Kale is stranded in Dubai due to airspace closure caused by the Iran war, his brother Jagannath Kale said on Monday.

The MP had gone to Dubai with a few friends on Friday, a day before the joint US-Israel attack on Iran, his brother said.

"He was to return via Abu Dhabi on March 3. But due to the cancellation of flights, he is stuck in Dubai. He is safe and there is nothing to worry," Jagannath Kale told PTI.

"We have conveyed his details to the Indian Embassy there. He will return once flights resume or as per the directions of the government," Jagannath Kale added.

Flights have been affected since Saturday after the US and Israel carried out a joint strike on Iran, resulting in the death of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran has struck US bases in several Gulf nations, prompting airlines to cancel flights following closure of airspace.

"The deve-lopments in the Gulf were causing deep anxiety in Kerala, the region is like a second home to lakhs of Malayalis whose hard work and sweat have shaped its growth. It would not be an exaggeration to say that almost every household in Kerala has at least one person connected to the Gulf

PINARAYI VIJAYAN
Kerala CM

"This silence not only points towards the moral decline of the present government but also raises questions on our civilisation, which has always worked to spread light across the world

AJAY RAI
UP Congress chief

"War only begets further conflict and that sustainable peace in West Asia can only be achieved through respectful negotiations, mutual understanding and the protection of civilian lives.

FAROOQ ABDULLAH
NC president

West Asia situation a matter of grave concern: PM Modi

Calls for dialogue and diplomacy to find a solution as tensions soar

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday described the current situation in West Asia as a matter of "grave concern", and called for dialogue and diplomacy to find a solution to such disputes.

"India supports resolution of all conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy," Modi said while addressing a press briefing after a bilateral meeting with his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney here.

"We are working closely with every country to ensure the safety of all Indian nationals in the region," added Modi.

Modi spoke to Bahrain King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman, and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

During his telephonic conversations, he said that the earliest restoration of regional peace and stability is of utmost importance.

In a telephonic conversation with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, Modi expressed concerns about recent developments while reiterating the need "for an early cessation of hostilities."

He also called UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to condemn the attacks on the emirates and to condole the loss of lives after Iran targeted the United States and its allies in the Gulf in response to the first wave of attack on it.

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

"The current situation in West Asia is a matter of deep concern for us. India supports the resolution of all disputes through dialogue and diplomacy. We will continue to work with all countries to ensure the safety of all Indian citizens in the region.

No comments so far

India has so far not commented on the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, who was killed in the aerial bombing carried out by the United States and its allies.

Modi was on a two-day official visit to Israel just ahead of the US-launched Operation Epic Fury against Iran, which reportedly eliminated top political and religious leadership in Tehran.

Escalating conflict threatens India's trade flows

NEW DELHI, DHNS

DISRUPTION

- Shipping firms impose emergency conflict surcharges
- Industry warns of higher insurance costs, port closures, container shortages
- Fertiliser sector fears disruption in sulphur, sulphuric acid supplies
- Sunflower oil shipments risk delays if vessels reroute away from Red Sea

Escalating tensions in West Asia are expected to disrupt India's imports and exports, with shipping companies already imposing emergency conflict surcharges on cargo moving through the region.

Industry bodies have warned that India's imports of edible sunflower oil and fertilisers could face disruptions, while exports of agricultural commodities to West Asia and Europe may also be hit.

Shipping companies have begun levying emergency conflict surcharges on cargo transiting West Asia. French container giant CMA CGM, for instance, has imposed surcharges ranging from $2,000 to $4,000 per container, raising costs for importers.

"As the conflict continues, the risk also increases and shipping companies may impose insurance surcharges, making imports costlier," Soluble Fertiliser Industry Association (SFIA) president Rajib Chakraborty said.

"The closure of so many ports will lead to congestion and a shortage of containers," he added.

Chakraborty flagged concerns over supplies of sulphur and sulphuric acid, critical inputs for producing DAP and SSP fertilisers ahead of India's kharif sowing season beginning in June.

Qatar, the UAE and Oman collectively account for 76% of India's sulphur imports.

India imports around 16 million tonnes of edible oil annually, of which sunflower oil accounts for roughly 20%, sourced primarily from Russia, Ukraine and Argentina. Shipments could face delays if vessels are forced to reroute away from the Red Sea.

"So far, there has been no impact. But if the conflict continues, supply of sunflower oil could be disrupted as shipments have to take a detour," Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) Executive Director BV Mehta said.

The Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) warned that any US-Iran escalation could send ripple effects through India's crude and edible oil markets.

"In the near term, we expect volatility to persist both in oil and in dollar/rupee prices, with central focus on these geopolitical tensions," IVPA said.

On the export side, India ships 20% of its oilmeal exports to West Asia and 15% to Europe. Officials said shipments of oilmeal, and agriculture, horticulture and floriculture products transiting the region were also at risk.

In a communication to the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) urged the Centre to waive demurrage charges on export cargo at airports, as flight disruptions arising from the West Asian crisis may impact the movement of consignments.

Kerala exporters feel the pinch

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Fishermen sit in a trawler navigating past containers stalked on a ship at a port in Vallarpadam in Kochi. REUTERS FILE PHOTO

Exporters of perishables such as vegetables and fruits from Kerala to Gulf countries are feeling the pinch of the conflict in West Asia, as exports have stopped due to flight cancellations.

The export of fruits and vegetables is usually on the higher side during the month of Ramadan. Hence, the impact is harsher for the exporters.

According to the Agricultural Products and Processed Food Exporters' Association (APEXA), around 140-150 tonnes of fruits and vegetables were being exported daily to Gulf countries through four airports in Kerala. It has completely stopped in view of the cancellation of all flights.

"In view of the Ramadan fasting, fruits like pineapple, banana, and plantain were witnessing more demand. The average price of the consignments is around $1.5 per kilogram. The exporters are now left with no option other than selling the products at throwaway prices in the local markets," APEXA president Abraham Thomas told *DH*.

Exporters of processed food have not yet been affected, as their consignments are generally sent by sea and the products have a longer shelf life.

Dry-fruit traders in the state are concerned that a prolonged conflict might affect the import of dates, because a major chunk of good-quality dates is imported from Iran.

Saudi-bound vessel docks

Zaki Vision, a brand-new offshore vessel bound for Saudi Arabia from China, has docked in the Kollam port in Kerala owing to tensions in West Asia.

The offshore support vessel was en route from China to the Ras Tanura port in Saudi Arabia. It is expected to resume its journey once the situation permits.

The Saint Kitts and Nevis flag carrier has 12 crew members, all foreign nationals.

Kollam port authorities said that the permission to dock at the port was given after obtaining clearance from Central agencies.

Centre steps in to shield exporters; meets stakeholders

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Amid escalating tension in the West Asian region, the Centre on Monday assured that it will be ready to help exporters and directed stakeholders to maintain close, real-time coordination for monitoring routes, capacity developments, surcharges, and equipment availability.

The Union Ministry of Commerce held inter-ministerial deliberations with exporters and logistics players to assess the impact of escalating tensions in the West Asian region on India's trade and assured measures to mitigate any disruptions.

The meeting, chaired by special secretary Suchindra Misra and director general of foreign trade Lav Agarwal, reviewed the emerging geopolitical situation and its potential impact on India's export-import cargo flows.

The ministry said that stakeholders presented an assessment of the evolving operational environment, including routing and transit-time changes, vessel scheduling adjustments, container/equipment availability, freight and insurance cost trends, and implications for time-sensitive exports.

The government reiterated its readiness to facilitate trade operations, including procedural flexibility in export-related authorisations in cases of genuine disruption, coordination with customs authorities to ensure smooth clearance, engagement with financial and insurance institutions to support exporter interests, and continued inter-ministerial coordination.

"The government reiterated its priority of ensuring continuity of EXIM logistics and mitigating any disruptions to India's trade flows," it said.

It was also emphasised that the approach will remain facilitative and coordinated, focusing on supply chain resilience and protecting exporters' interests—especially MSMEs—while ensuring essential imports for domestic production and consumption are not adversely affected.

Funeral prayer for Khamenei held at AMU

ALIGARH (UP), PTI: Members of the Muslim community held a funeral prayer for Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei at the lawns of the Aligarh Muslim University Students Union compound here amid tight security, with speakers urging the Indian government to offer condolences to the cleric's family instead of remaining silent.

The 'Ghaibaana Namaaz-e-Janazza' (funeral prayer in absentia) was attended by several people, including students of the university.

The prayer was preceded by slogans of Shia-Sunni unity and addresses to the gathering, where several speakers asserted that Ayatollah Khamenei, in his death, attained "martyrdom and aroused a wave of sympathy beyond the borders of his own country".

Several speakers urged the government of India to offer condolences to the family of the departed cleric, instead of remaining silent.

Former president of the AMU Students Union Salman Imtiaz said that Khamenei, in his death, "became the voice of all those downtrodden people of the world who speak for humanity against the imperialist forces of the world."

The meeting was held under tight security arrangements, and the participants were advised to disperse after the meeting instead of taking out any procession, police sources said.

How militancy lost its social currency in J&K

Sustained security operations, legal actions, administrative measures altered incentives

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

In the early years of the insurgency in the 1990s and again during the surge in local recruitment in the mid-2010s, being related to a militant was spoken of with a degree of pride in certain pockets of Jammu and Kashmir.

A brother in the ranks, a cousin or friend "in the mountains" was at times framed as a symbol of defiance.

The imagery reached its digital peak around Burhan Wani, whose social media posts as a commander of Hizbul Mujahideen gave militancy a new-age visibility. His killing in July 2016 triggered months of unrest, with funerals and online posts reflecting open admiration among sections of the youth.

Nearly a decade later, that social currency has all but collapsed. A combination of sustained security operations, legal action against alleged overground networks, and administrative measures targeting families of militants has fundamentally altered incentives.

Since 2019, the J&K administration has terminated dozens of government employees accused of militant links under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution, which allows dismissal without a formal inquiry in the interest of national security.

Police verification processes for passports and government jobs have also tightened. Adverse reports — including those citing militant family backgrounds — have led to denial of travel documents or employment clearances in several cases.

A senior academic at the University of Kashmir, requesting anonymity, said: "Now, even distant association becomes a source of anxiety. It can affect a sibling's career, a passport, even marriage prospects."

He said the shift was both social and strategic. "The ecosystem that sustained militancy thrived on local legitimacy. Once that legitimacy weakens — because of enforcement, awareness, or changing aspirations — recruitment automatically declines."

The digital sphere mirrors the change. Social media platforms that once amplified militant imagery are now closely monitored. The police have booked individuals for allegedly glorifying militants online, and cyber units routinely issue warnings against sharing such content.

WHAT WORKED

- J&K administration terminated dozens of government employees accused of terrorism links
- Police verification processes for passports and government jobs have also tightened
- The police have booked individuals for allegedly glorifying militants online

TTD chairman faces resignation calls after videos trigger row

HYDERABAD, DHNS: Pressure appears to be mounting on Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Chairman B R Naidu after alleged videos of him with a woman surfaced online on Sunday.

Naidu, who owns and runs the Telugu satellite news channel TV5, dismissed the clips as morphed, but the YSRCP in the Opposition has demanded his resignation, arguing the pious TTD position demands moral integrity.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, YSRCP leader and former TTD chairman Bhumana Karunakar Reddy asserted that the videos and photos were sent for scrutiny, and that the report said they were genuine, contrary to what Naidu claimed.

Reddy also said Naidu's threats would cut no ice as he had been caught on the wrong foot, and these obscene pictures and videos were circulating on social media.

Andhra Pradesh Chairman and TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu had appointed this person, who had such questionable credentials, to head the TTD, tarnishing its image and sanctity, he alleged.

Displaying the pictures and videos, he read out a letter purportedly written by the woman seen in them.

In it, she appeared to identify herself as someone who had had a long acquaintance and a relationship with B R Naidu.

CBI moves HC against discharge of Kejriwal, others in excise case

NEW DELHI, PTI

Arvind Kejriwal

Challenging the special court order discharging former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and others in the excise policy case, the CBI has submitted to the Delhi High Court that the order was based "on a selective reading of the prosecution case, disregarding the material showing the culpability of the accused", and was "patently illegal".

In its 974-page petition before the high court, the CBI said the Special Judge essentially conducted a mini-trial and "spent 4 months' time reading only the file of the case", which shows appreciation of the evidence by the judge which "otherwise is not permitted at this stage".

The special judge dealt with separate limbs of conspiracy in isolation rather than assessing the actions of the accused cumulatively, the agency also said.

Terming the order "perverse", the agency said it suffers from "errors apparent on the face", is based on "misreading" of facts and violates the Supreme Court's assertions related to the stage when charges are to be framed.

The special court had on Friday discharged Kejriwal, Sisodia and 21 others in the liquor-policy case by refusing to take cognisance of the CBI chargesheet against them.

Among the 21 people given a clean chit in the case is Telangana Jagruthi president K Kavitha.

Special Judge Jitendra Singh had rapped the CBI for lapses in the investigation, saying there was no cogent evidence against Kejriwal and no prima facie case against Sisodia and the other accused.

Within hours, the CBI had approached the high court challenging the order through an urgent revision petition. The hearing in the case will take place on March 9.

Temple board to oppose entry of women aged 10 to 50 into Sabarimala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), which manages Kerala's famous Sabarimala Ayyappa temple, has decided to file an affidavit before the Supreme Court opposing the entry of women in the 10-50 age group to the shrine.

TDB president K Jayakumar said the board was bound to protect temples as well as its beliefs and customs. Hence, the board meeting on Monday passed a resolution maintaining that the ban on the entry of women aged 10-50 should continue.

Even as the CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) is yet to make its stand clear, the TDB's decision could align with the ruling front's policy.

Last month, the Supreme Court asked all the parties involved in the matter to give their opinion before March 14 on the review petition against the 2018 order lifting the ban on the entry of women aged 10-50 to the temple. The Left-Front government, as well as the TDB, had earlier backed the SC order.

Kerala Law Minister P Rajeev's recent reaction, that the government would always look to protect the beliefs of devotees, was widely interpreted as a deviation from its earlier progressive stand.

Women in the 10-50 age group are banned from the temple based on the belief that Lord Ayyappa is a "Naishtika brahmachari" (celibate), and hence women of menstruating age should not be allowed.

The Left Front government's decision to enforce the 2018 SC order lifting the ban had led to violent protests by the BJP and Sangh-Parivar outfits. The Congress also took a position against the SC order, citing the protection of beliefs and traditions.

Two women — Bindu Ammini and Kanakadurga — were allowed to enter the hill shrine on January 2, 2019, with police protection.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

CHECK OUT MY LATEST VLOG, MOM!
A TURDUCKEN IS A TASTY ALTERNATIVE TO PLAIN OL' TURKEY
IT'S FINE WITH ME, BUT YOU SHOULD PROBABLY RUN IT BY YOUR DAD FIRST
I ALREADY DID...

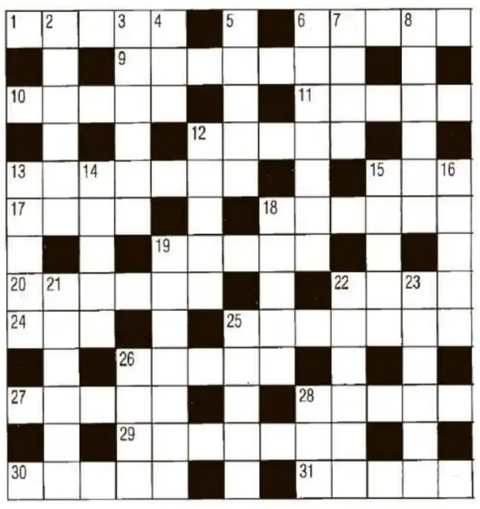
Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12365



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Foam coming forth unexpectedly (5)
6 Of money, cheat with a cry of distaste (5)
9 Polish up a picture of the river (7)
10 Strong enough to take the short way out (5)
11 Very apparent to many a listener (5)
12 Highest possible rank or status (5)
13 Interrupts someone giving his address (7)
15 Angry maybe, but akin to being kind (3)
17 Shows humanity (4)
18 Possibly buries discoloured tissue (6)
19 Men involved in the noble art? (5)
20 Club motorist? (6)
22 A letter from Greece (4)
24 Some newsagents look tired (3)
25 It's faster with a motor (7)
26 Dump by the wayside (5)
27 Runner with a name for being highly smashed! (5)
28 Beast with a waterside joint (5)
29 Say no men can possibly hold it back! (7)
30 Stayed sound and sober (5)
31 The price of thoughts? (5)

DOWN
2 Sooner than bring Romeo heartbreak (6)
3 Big boxes containing very personal possessions? (6)
4 So, moving from the south, one finds shelter (3)
5 Does he keep his distance? (5)
6 Their orders are patiently obeyed (7)
7 Commonly ending up in solitary (4)
8 Wine one is mad about at middle-age? (6)
12 Hesitate to be awfully rude about a military leader (5)
13 The bosses are a shade different (5)
14 Rugged Scot, possibly stony? (5)
15 Being the fixer, I have to be in the right (5)
16 Don't allow a deb to be hard-hearted (5)
18 A nice place to be stranded! (5)
19 Detectives are indeed very positive! (7)
21 Too much noise on court? (6)
22 Ox-like, bigheaded and sheepish (6)
23 Sort of bowling one can figure to fix? (6)
25 They can cope with costs cannily (5)
26 Not a girl's full name (4)
28 Hot work at the dance (3)

ACROSS
1 Permanently watery land (5)
6 Draconian (5)
9 A dictionary (7)
10 Archer's missile (5)
11 Steal game (5)
12 Warning device (5)
13 Infectious disease (7)
15 Number (3)
17 Paradise (4)
18 Time to come (6)
19 Artificial waterway (5)
20 Introduce gradually (6)
22 Cult (4)
24 Foot digit (3)
25 Confuses (7)
26 Detests (5)
27 Timorous (5)
28 Ski-slope (5)
29 Old soldier (7)
30 Insurgent (5)
31 Discourage (5)

DOWN
2 Overseas (6)
3 Catchword (6)
4 Cut with an axe (3)
5 Shinbone (5)
6 Optimistic (7)
7 Soon (4)
8 Association football (6)
12 Rope-making fibre (5)
13 Deserve (5)
14 Rental contract (5)
15 Melodies (5)
16 Amphibians (5)
18 Loses colour (5)
19 Fortified building (7)
21 Beginner (6)
22 Lying face upwards (6)
23 Middle point (6)
25 Brimless cap (5)
26 Bee structure (4)
28 Person's residence (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12364

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 3, Rough 8, W-ilts 10, Reach 11, Tea 12, Trial 13, Blanche 15, Pe-p up 18, Lie 19, Senora 21, R-edcaps 22, Ob-e-y 23, See-D 24, Wrecker 26, Hold it 29, Tim 31, Styes 32, Artiste 34, Belle 35, Nor 36, Devil 37, Fat-Al 38, Tying.
DOWN: 1, Title 2, Stanley 4, Ogre 5, Grapes 6, Hele-n 7, S-C-our 9, Lea 12, The cart 14, CID 16, Power 17, Paddy 19, Spec-t-re 20, Moths 21, Reply 23, Seminar 24, Wi-SE-ly 25, Kit 27, Otter 28, Debit 30, Straw 32, Alan 33, Sot.

EASY
ACROSS: 3, Japan 8, Galas 10, Basil 11, Per 12, Solid 13, Fairway 15, Diced 18, Yet 19, Berate 21, Motives 22, Loan 23, Ammo 24, Effects 26, Apiary 29, Fat 31, Drama 32, Bitumen 34, Asset 35, Nap 36, Furze 37, Leper 38, Essay.
DOWN: 1, Tapas 2, Carry on 4, Ahoy 5, Abides 6, Nadir 7, Rivet 9, Lei 12, Satisfy 14, Wet 16, Calms 17, Depot 19, Benefit 20, Plead 21, Mafia 23, Attunes 24, Erases 25, Cat 27, Proud 28, Amaze 30, Repel 32, Beta 33, Map.

◆SU-DO-KU-6844◆

		2		3				
5	4		9	6	7	8		
6		7	4					
2	7				8	1		
		4	7		9	3		
		8	1				2	7
					4	2		1
		9	6	1	3		5	8
				9		7		

easy

SOLUTION TO 6843

3	6	8	5	4	1	7	9	2
7	9	4	3	6	2	1	8	5
1	2	5	7	8	9	3	6	4
4	1	2	6	7	8	9	5	3
9	7	3	4	2	5	6	1	8
5	8	6	9	1	3	4	2	7
2	3	1	8	9	4	5	7	6
8	5	7	1	3	6	2	4	9
6	4	9	2	5	7	8	3	1

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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							RACK 1
R1	D2	E1	O1	O1	M3	T1	
							RACK 2
M3	Y4	L1	S1	O1	E1	A1	3rd Letter Double
							RACK 3
E1	L1	U1	K5	D2	Q10	A1	Triple Word Score
							RACK 4
O1	G2	U1	U1	H4	T1	N1	

PAR SCORE 125-135
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

E1	V4	O1	L1	V4	E1	S1	RACK 1 =	89
K5	U1	D2	Z10	U1			RACK 2 =	39
F4	A1	T1	E1	F4	U1	L1	RACK 3 =	63
L1	E1	P3	R1	O1	S1	Y4	RACK 4 =	74
							JUDD'S TOTAL	265

PAR SCORE 175-185

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GTNIE

URRNE

GREHPO

NTBEIT

I love this song! Let's get this party started!
Yeah! Feel that rhythm! Let's dance!
8/22
THEY CRANKED THE RADIO WHILE HARVESTING ROOT VEGETABLES SO THEY COULD ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

" ○○○○○○ " ○○○ " ○○○○○ "

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ABATE JOKER ACCORD SHRIMP
Answer: This particular preserves stand at the farmers market was — JAM PACKED

HITORI-3298

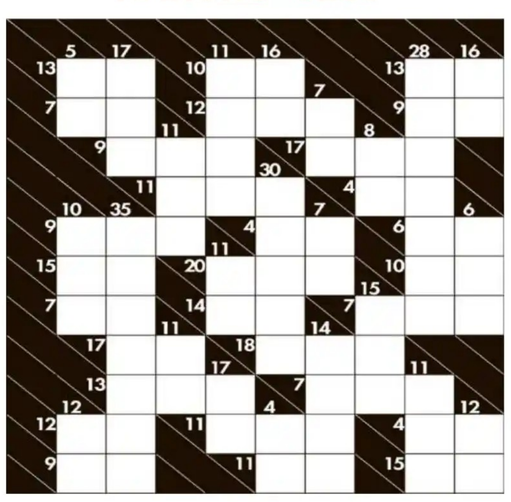
5	1	8	2	8	4	4	7
3	4	6	5	7	2	4	5
7	2	1	8	5	2	3	5
1	5	5	6	7	8	7	4
2	4	5	7	1	2	6	5
5	8	7	6	3	6	5	2
6	7	8	5	4	5	2	6
4	4	4	1	4	5	8	6

SOLUTION TO 3297

3	1	4	2	■	6	7	■
2	■	5	■	6	7	■	3
7	6	■	5	2	■	1	4
4	■	3	6	■	8	5	7
8	4	1	■	7	2	■	6
■	2	■	7	1	3	4	■
6	3	7	1	■	4	■	2
■	7	■	4	3	1	2	8

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3298



SOLUTION TO 3297

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3844

■					1	5	6	■
	■				4	7	■	
	9	2				■		
	5		8		■			
			6	■				3
		9	■	3	7			
		■		5		1		
	■	5			8	4	■	
■		1		9				■

SOLUTION TO 3843

6	9	5	1	7	4	2	3	8
1	7	2	8	3	5	9	4	6
4	8	3	2	9	6	1	5	7
9	4	6	5	8	3	7	1	2
3	1	7	4	2	9	8	6	5
2	5	8	7	6	1	3	9	4
8	3	9	6	5	7	4	2	1
7	6	4	9	1	2	5	8	3
5	2	1	3	4	8	6	7	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

TOP CONTENDERS FOR IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER

Mojtaba Khamenei (55)
Son of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei; mid-level Shiite cleric
- Strong ties to the Revolutionary Guard
- Never held public office

Hassan Khomeini (53)
Grandson of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini; moderate voice
- Custodian of Khomeini mausoleum in Tehran
- Never held government office

Ali Reza Arafi (68)
Senior cleric; member of provisional governing council
- Member of Guardian Council (since 2019)
- Elected to Assembly of Experts in 2022

Hassan Rouhani (77)
Former president (2013–2021); relative moderate
- Architect of 2015 nuclear agreement
- Disqualified from Assembly of Experts re-election in 2024

Mohammad Mehdi Mirbagheri (63)
Hard-line cleric; Assembly of Experts member
- Close to ultra-conservative circles
- Opposed COVID-era school closures

SUCCESSION QUESTION LOOMS: Grandson of Islamic republic's founder seen as moderate option

Hassan Khomeini emerges as key contender to lead Iran

REUTERS

A grandson of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is likely to figure prominently in the deliberations of the clerics who will determine who replaces Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as supreme leader.

The killing of Khamenei, 86, in a US-Israeli attack has brought new urgency to the question of who will be the next supreme leader.

Hassan Khomeini is the most visible of the late Ayatollah's 15 grandchildren and is seen as a relative moderate within Iran's clerical establishment. He enjoys close ties to reformists including former presidents Mohammed Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, who both pursued policies of engagement with the West when in office.

Khomeini, 53, holds a symbolically important role in public life as custodian of his grandfather's mausoleum in southern Tehran. He has never served in government.

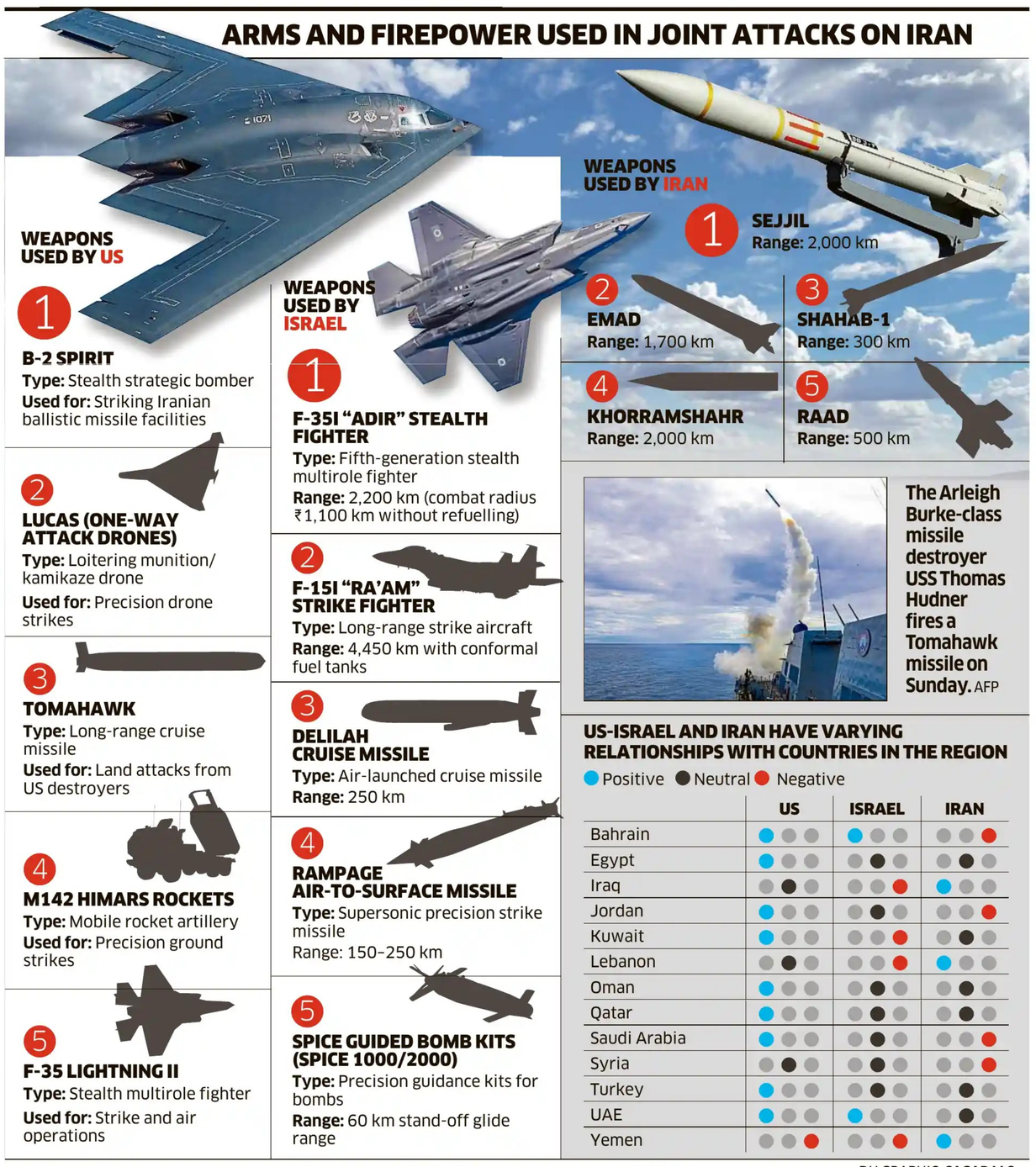
Some politicians inside Iran have seen him as a rival to hardliners who gained sway under Khamenei, notably his son, Mojtaba. The case for installing a moderate successor to Khamenei gained momentum among some Iranian politicians in the wake of unrest that swept Iran in January as a means of shoring up the Islamic Republic in the face of widening dissent.

While loyal to the Islamic Republic established after the Shah was toppled in 1979, Khomeini has a track record of urging reform and has occasionally voiced dissent. In 2021, he criticised the Guardian Council — the branch of Iran's theocracy responsible for vetting presidential candidates — after it barred reformists.

The council's move paved the way for the victory of hardliner Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash in 2024.

"You can't pick someone for me and tell me to vote for them!" Khomeini said at the time. He also demanded accountability after Mahsa Amini, a young Iranian woman, died in 2022 after being taken into custody by morality police, accused of violating conservative dress codes.

ARMS AND FIREPOWER USED IN JOINT ATTACKS ON IRAN



WEAPONS USED BY US

1 **B-2 SPIRIT**
Type: Stealth strategic bomber
Used for: Striking Iranian ballistic missile facilities

2 **LUCAS (ONE-WAY ATTACK DRONES)**
Type: Loitering munition/ kamikaze drone
Used for: Precision drone strikes

3 **TOMAHAWK**
Type: Long-range cruise missile
Used for: Land attacks from US destroyers

4 **M142 HIMARS ROCKETS**
Type: Mobile rocket artillery
Used for: Precision ground strikes

5 **F-35 LIGHTNING II**
Type: Stealth multirole fighter
Used for: Strike and air operations

WEAPONS USED BY ISRAEL

1 **F-35I "ADIR" STEALTH FIGHTER**
Type: Fifth-generation stealth multirole fighter
Range: 2,200 km (combat radius ₹1,100 km without refuelling)

2 **F-15I "RA'AM" STRIKE FIGHTER**
Type: Long-range strike aircraft
Range: 4,450 km with conformal fuel tanks

3 **DELILAH CRUISE MISSILE**
Type: Air-launched cruise missile
Range: 250 km

4 **RAMPAGE AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSILE**
Type: Supersonic precision strike missile
Range: 150–250 km

5 **SPICE GUIDED BOMB KITS (SPICE 1000/2000)**
Type: Precision guidance kits for bombs
Range: 60 km stand-off glide range

WEAPONS USED BY IRAN

1 **SEJJIL** **Range:** 2,000 km

2 **EMAD** **Range:** 1,700 km

3 **SHAHAB-1** **Range:** 300 km

4 **KHORRAMSHAHR** **Range:** 2,000 km

5 **RAAD** **Range:** 500 km

The Arleigh Burke-class missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner fires a Tomahawk missile on Sunday. AFP

US-ISRAEL AND IRAN HAVE VARYING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative

	US	ISRAEL	IRAN
Bahrain	●	●	●
Egypt	●	●	●
Iraq	●	●	●
Jordan	●	●	●
Kuwait	●	●	●
Lebanon	●	●	●
Oman	●	●	●
Qatar	●	●	●
Saudi Arabia	●	●	●
Syria	●	●	●
Turkey	●	●	●
UAE	●	●	●
Yemen	●	●	●

DH GRAPHIC: SAGAR M S

Short and medium-range missiles key to Iran's response

SUMIT PANDE
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Iran has been using a battery of short and medium-range missiles to retaliate against Israel and the US bases in the Gulf.

Its elite Revolutionary Guards have also specifically targeted high-profile and upmarket enclaves of US allies in West Asia, such as five-star resorts, international airports in Dubai, and upscale residential enclaves in Bahrain.

Unlike the 12-day conflict last year that saw Iran use a restrained retaliation against strikes at its nuclear installations, this time, though, after the killing of its supreme leader, Ayatullah Ali Khameini, Iran has fired a whole gamut of short to medium-range projectiles.

Iran's short-range ballistic missiles can strike targets between 150 and 800 km. These are considered to be variants of the Fateh series of ballistic missiles, like Shahab and Zolfaghar, that can be launched in a volley.

Iran is said to have used these projectiles to target an Iraqi air base in 2020 after a US drone strike killed its high-profile General Qassem Soleimani.

Iran's medium-range arsenal has a striking range of 1,500 to 2,000 km. Of these, Sejjil, which operates on solid fuel, offers quick launch and mobility to evade incoming missiles. This medium-range missile has been used by Iran to target Israel and other US allies in the Gulf in response to Operation Epic Fury. Iran is said to have also deployed cruise missiles and drones that fly low past the air defence systems. The series includes anti-ship missiles like Soumar, which has a range of 2,500 km.

Amidst protracted confrontation with the US and its allies, Iran has created an underground network to store and conceal its missiles aimed at surviving the first wave of attacks and minimising depletion of its firepower.

Iran has also been using ideologically aligned militia to target US and Israeli assets. Hezbollah in Lebanon and Yemen's Houthis have been used in the past to expand the theatre of war.

1 Indian killed in attack on oil tanker

DUBAI, PTI

An Indian national was killed on Monday when an explosive-laden drone boat struck an oil tanker off the coast of Muscat Governorate, according to officials.

In a statement, Oman's Ministry of Defence said the Maritime Security Centre reported that the oil tanker MKD Vyom was hit by an unmanned boat 52 nautical miles off the coast of Muscat Governorate.

It said the attack resulted in a fire and explosion in the engine room and the death of one crew member. The remaining 21 crew members were evacuated.

The Embassy of India in Oman expressed its "deepest condolences" on the tragic demise of the Indian crew member on board MKD Vyom.

The mission said it is in close coordination with local authorities in Oman to facilitate the safe and early repatriation of its nationals on board the vessel. "We remain committed to extending all possible assistance in this matter," it said.

The attack triggered a fire and explosion in the main engine room, resulting in the death of one Indian crew member. In coordination with the Maritime Security Centre, the tanker's 21 crew members – 16 Indians, four Bangladeshis and one Ukrainian national – were evacuated safely.

31 killed in Israeli strikes on Lebanon after Hezbollah attack

DUBAI, AP/PTI: Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon after Hezbollah attacked Israel have killed at least 31 people, Lebanon's Health Ministry said on Monday.

The Hezbollah attack and the Israeli retaliatory strikes expand the ongoing war gripping West Asia after the US and Israel launched an airstrike campaign targeting Iran.

The Health Ministry said the strikes also wounded 149 people. It said about two-thirds of the dead were in southern Lebanon. Meanwhile, as Kuwait faced an ongoing attack, the United States issued an urgent warning to Americans there to take cover and remain indoors. It said: "Do not come to the Embassy," without elaborating.

Lebanese state bans Hezbollah military activities

BEIRUT, AFP: Lebanon's government has decided on an "immediate ban" on Iran-backed Hezbollah's military and security activity, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said Monday, in an unprecedented move as Israel retaliated to rocket fire.

Hezbollah is represented in both the government and parliament, and the move came hours after the party announced it had launched rockets and drones toward Israel early Monday to avenge the killing of Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei in US-Israeli attacks on Saturday.

Hezbollah condemned the government's decision to ban its military activities, while Israel carried out retaliatory strikes in response to rockets fired by the Iran-backed group.

In a statement, Mohammed Raad, head of the group's parliamentary bloc, condemned Beirut's "swaggering decisions", saying that "the Lebanese were expecting a decision rejecting the (Israeli) aggression".

Asylum overhaul: UK to make refugee status temporary

New 30-month review system aims to deter illegal crossings

LONDON, PTI

Refugee status granted by the UK will become temporary and subject to review every 30 months for all adults claiming asylum in the country from Monday, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood has announced.

The change, described by the South Asian heritage minister as the UK's biggest asylum system reform, follows her visit to Denmark last week to learn from a similar Danish approach in recent years.

According to the Home Office, Denmark reduced asylum claims by more than 90 per cent in a decade through a similar temporary approach.

"This country will always provide sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution. But we must also ensure our asylum system is not creating pull factors that draw people on dangerous journeys across the world, fuelling and funding human traffickers," Mahmood said in a statement.

Migrants try to board a smuggler's boat in an attempt to cross the English Channel at Gravelines in France. AFP FILE

"Genuine refugees will find safety in Britain, but we must also reduce the incentives that draw people here at such scale, including those without a legitimate need for protection. So, once a refugee's home is safe and they are able to return, they will be expected to do so. "This is a firm but fair approach, restoring order and control of Britain's borders while protecting those fleeing war and repression," she said.

Home Office statistics released last week revealed the number of people claiming asylum in the UK fell by 4 per cent in 2025, despite the number of people arriving illegally in the country on small boats rising by 13 per cent.

Indians were ranked seventh among nationals claiming asylum in the past year, with Pakistan, Eritrea, Iran, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Vietnam completing the top 10.

Under the new measures enforced this week, protection will be renewed only for refugees who still face danger in their home country. Those whose country is deemed safe at the time of a 30-month review will be expected to return home.

Insurgents kill 169 people in South Sudan

JUBA (SOUTH SUDAN), AP/PTI

At least 169 people were killed after insurgents raided a village in a remote area of South Sudan, a local official said on Monday. It is the latest bout of sporadic violence that has left the country teetering on the verge of full-blown civil war.

The victims, including 90 civilians, were attacked on Sunday in Abiemnom county, said James Monyluak, information minister for the administrative area of Ruweng.

He said women and children were among the dead, as well as dozens of combatants.

The UN Mission in South Sudan, known as UNMISS, said in a statement that 1,000 people sought shelter at its base after the attack.

"Such violence places civilians at grave risk and must stop immediately," Anita Kiki Gbeho, a UNMISS official, said in a statement. "I urge all involved to cease hostilities without delay and engage in constructive dialogue to address their grievances."

"Our peacekeepers will continue to do everything within their capabilities to protect civilians seeking refuge at our base," she added.

The UNMISS statement cited 23 wounded in the attack in Ruweng, as well as concern over "reports indicating that dozens of civilians and some local officials have lost their lives." The killings are part of an escalating wave of violence gripping South Sudan as government forces loyal to President Salva Kiir battle armed men who are believed to be loyal to opposition leader Riek Machar.

The armed youths who carried out the latest attack are believed to have ties with Machar's group, known as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In-Opposition.

Machar was Kiir's deputy until September, when he was removed after he faced criminal charges. He is under house arrest in Juba, the South Sudan capital, as his trial progresses. The US is urging talks between Kiir and Machar. Ongoing violence threatens a fragile peace reached in 2018 after a five-year civil war.

Myanmar's junta pardons 10,000 prisoners before parliament opens

BANGKOK, AP/PTI: The head of Myanmar's military government granted amnesty to more than 10,000 prisoners and reduced the sentences of others to mark a holiday, state-run media reported on Monday.

There was no sign that former leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who was ousted in the military takeover in 2021 and has been held virtually incommunicado since then, would be freed. The amnesty comes two weeks before parliament is set to convene for its first session in more than five years, following the recent election that critics said was neither free nor fair.

State-run MRTV television reported that Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military government, pardoned 10,162 prisoners, including 7,337 convicted under a counter-terrorism law, on Peasants' Day, a national holiday honouring farmers.

A separate statement said 12,487 people who were either being prosecuted under that law or were in hiding will receive amnesty and have their incitement cases closed.

An Afghan man stands next to a damaged car following a Pakistani airstrikes in Kandahar. REUTERS FILE

Pakistan intensifies offensive against Afghan Taliban

ISLAMABAD, PTI: Pakistan's offensive against the Afghan Taliban was continuing as its security forces destroyed an ammunition depot, state media reported on Monday.

Pakistan launched 'Operation Ghazab lil Haq' last week after Afghan Taliban forces attacked 53 locations along the more than 2,600 km-long border. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said Pakistan has killed 415 Afghan Taliban fighters and injured more than 580 in the ongoing military operation.

Citing security sources, state-run Pakistan Television (PTV) reported that Pakistani forces destroyed an ammunition depot in Khost, as the army's "vigorous and powerful counter-attacks" against Afghan Taliban aggression continued. "Pak Army effectively destroyed the ammunition depot of Fitna al-Khawarij and the Afghan Taliban in Khost. Fitna al-Khawarij and the Afghan Taliban regime are facing a complete retreat on every front after their unprovoked aggression on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border," it reported.

Afghan sources said that Pakistan expanded air attacks to the Bagram air base, but there was no official confirmation from the Pakistan side.

Meanwhile, there is no end in sight to the conflict as Pakistan forces are dismantling the Taliban's security apparatus, which was used to stage an attack on Thursday that led to the current phase of fighting, according to security sources.

France to increase nuclear warheads

L'ÎLE LONGUE (FRANCE), AP/PTI: French President Emmanuel Macron announced on Monday that his government will increase the country's nuclear warheads from the current level of fewer than 300, but did not give a figure for the increase.

It will be the first time France has increased its nuclear arsenal since at least 1992.

"I have decided to increase the number of warheads in our arsenal," Macron said during a speech at a military base at L'Île Longue in northwestern France that hosts the country's ballistic missile submarines.

Macron's speech was aimed at explaining how French nuclear weapons fit into Europe's security amid concerns raised on the continent by recurring tensions with United States President Donald Trump.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE, U.R. RAO SATELLITE CENTRE
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP
HAL Airport Road, Bengaluru - 560 017. (Phone: 080 25084184, 4156)
BRIEF E-TENDER NOTICE

Sl. No	Description	Details			
1	Name of work	Carrying Out Improvements for The Existing Ground Water Recharge Pond Near STP at ISITE Campus, URSC, Marathahalli, Bengaluru- 560037.	Retrofitting Works for Improvements to Existing Quarters at CISF Thippasandra, Indiranagar, Bengaluru.	Contract For Providing and Laying PVC Sheet Flooring Works at Various Locations in Main Campus, URSC, Vimanapura and ISITE Campus, Marathahalli, Bengaluru.	Providing Wooden Racks, Shelves and Cupboard for Storing ESD Garments, Slippers and Baggage in New CATF And DTF Building at ISITE Campus, URSC, Marathahalli, Bengaluru-560037.
2	E-Tender Notice No.	URSC/C&MG/C/M/35/2025-26, Dt.02/03/2026	URSC/C&MG/C/M/36/2025-26, Dt.02/03/2026	URSC/C&MG/C/M/37/2025-26, Dt.02/03/2026	URSC/C&MG/C/M/38/2025-26, Dt.02/03/2026
3	Estimated cost put to Tender	₹ 22.89 Lakhs	₹ 25.55 Lakhs	₹ 11.81 Lakhs	₹ 6.03 Lakhs
4	Period of completion	Five Months	Six Months	Twelve Months	Three Months
5	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	**₹ 45,780/- valid for 180 days**	**₹ 51,100/- valid for 180 days**	**₹ 23,620/- valid for 180 days**	**₹ 12,060/- valid for 180 days**

Interested tenderers may please refer Detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender (NIET) for eligibility criteria and other details along with Hindi version in website: www.isro.gov.in and download the tender documents from www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO.

Sd/-
Group Director, C&MG, URSC

SHOCK MOVES: Rupee crashes to settle at 91.47 against US dollar, price of safe-haven gold rises 4.92%

Stocks tank, oil prices surge on escalating Iran war

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Crude oil prices soared by around 10% in the international markets, while the Indian stock market's key indices slumped with Sensex losing 1,048 points on Monday, leading to over Rs 6.5 lakh crore erosion in investor wealth, as the conflict in West Asia disrupted the global energy supply chain.

The benchmark Sensex of the BSE slumped 1,048.34 points or 1.29% to 80,238.85 points. It dipped to a low of 78,543.73 points in the intraday. Nifty 50 of the NSE closed 312.95 points or 1.24% down at 24,865.70, after slumping to a low of 24,603.50 points in the intraday. Both indices closed at their lowest level in around five months.

Escalating tensions in West Asia, following the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in coordinated airstrikes by the US and Israel rattled markets.

Crude prices surged, while the rupee weakened. Price of one barrel of Brent crude surged to around $80 on Monday, from $72.87 recorded on Friday. The rupee crashed to settle at 91.47 against the dollar.

"Rising crude prices and a weakening INR reflect concerns over potential disruptions to oil supply, which could increase inflationary pressures in India and impact fiscals and

An oil tanker docked offshore in Dubai, amid the conflict that has engulfed West Asia. AFP

strain margins for energy and chemical-dependent sectors," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments.

The NSE Nifty India Volatility index ended 25.01% higher at 17.13. Sector-wise, the Nifty Auto ended 2.20% down to become the worst-performing index, while the Nifty Metal rose 0.24% higher and outperformed sectoral indices. The surge in volatility index signals increased uncertainty and risk aversion among market participants. "Investors are rotating toward traditional safe-haven assets and adopting a cautious stance, awaiting greater clarity," said Nair.

"Traders are advised to remain cautious near crucial support levels and avoid fresh directional positions until a decisive breakout above resistance zones emerges," said Hitesh Tailor, Research Analyst at Choice Equity Broking.

Silver prices hit Rs 3 lakh/kg

NEW DELHI, PTI: Precious metal prices skyrocketed up to 12% here on Monday, as investors flocked to safe-haven assets following an escalation of hostilities in West Asia.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal surged by Rs 32,000, or 11.94%, to Rs 3,00,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of Rs 2,68,000 per kg.

In the bullion market, price of gold of 99.9% purity climbed Rs 8,100, or 4.92%, to Rs 1,72,800 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 1,64,700 per 10 grams in the previous market session. In the international market, spot gold gained $116.38, or 2.21% to $5,394.28 per ounce, while silver was trading 1.43% higher at $95.19 per ounce.

India refiners may embrace Russian oil again amid crisis

BLOOMBERG: Indian state refiners and officials met over the weekend to hammer out contingency plans for a crisis in Iran that has all but stopped flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

As the world's third-largest oil importer, India is considering options that include turning to Russian cargoes currently loitering near its waters, sources said. India became the single-most important buyer of Moscow's seaborne crude after the invasion of Ukraine, but has been cutting back in response to US pressure.

India has since kept Russian oil purchases to a minimum, and in February loaded just over 1 million barrels a day — roughly half of the amount imported at the peak, and the lowest level since September 2022. Much of that shortfall has been filled with West Asian barrels.

Oil Ministry officials, indicating national supplies that could last up to two weeks, between commercial and state reserves, are now pushing for the Ministry of External Affairs to seek some room for manoeuvre from Washington. As of late last week, there were 9.5 million barrels of Russian oil sitting in Asian waters.

In a post on X on Monday, the Oil Ministry said it continues to monitor the situation and that "all steps will be taken in order to ensure availability and affordability of major petroleum products in the country".

Processors also have a limited number of other alternatives, including tapping domestic strategic petroleum reserve, fast-tracking supplies from Venezuela and pushing domestic producers to raise output, sources said. They added refiners were also asking Saudi Aramco to ship more crude via pipeline to the Red Sea port of Yanbu, which would avoid Hormuz.

Should the crisis drag on and continue to curb flows, the government could consider curbing fuel exports to secure enough supply for domestic consumers, sources said. It can prioritise household gas and piped supplies, potentially directing industrial users to switch fuels.

Officials could also press Reliance Industries to divert more fuel to the domestic market, while other refiners tweak output to maximise LPG production at the expense of products such as naphtha, sources said.

West Asia conflict's short-term impact will be modest-to-none for IT firms

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

For Indian IT services firms, West Asia is a significant market, primarily driven by digital transformation initiatives. From TCS, Infosys, Wipro, to HCLTech, firms have expanded their footprint and established a strong presence, with growth-centred around AI-driven cloud transformation projects. Experts said though the short-term impact from the ongoing conflict is none, as there would not be any major change in client-spending, long-drawn tensions could impact firms, as there will be a slowdown in discretionary spending.

The short-term impact will be modest-to-none, Peter Bendor-Samuel, Founder and Executive Chairman of Everest Group, told *DH*.

"If the war drags on and it drives up oil prices, which keep inflation elevated, it will slow down the economy, which will impact them," he said.

West Asia has been one of the few bright spots for growth. "However, these relationships and the revenue from them will not be materially affected in the short-run. But in a long war, these could be negatively-affected," he said.

With ambitious national transformation agendas such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's Digital Economy Strategy, governments and enterprises across the region are investing heavily in AI, cloud infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital public services. These initiatives are creating significant opportunities for Indian IT firms that have long been trusted partners in delivering large-scale technology transformation programs globally, Ankush Sabharwal, Founder & CEO, CoRover, said.

Industry estimates suggest West Asia contributes roughly 8-10% of revenues for many large Indian IT services firms, while the region's enterprise technology services market is projected to exceed $20-25 billion in the coming years. Indian companies are playing a vital role in sectors such as banking, telecom, energy, government services, and smart city initiatives, supporting mission-critical digital infrastructure, Sabharwal added.

According to him, while geopolitical developments in the region can create short-term uncertainty in global markets, Indian IT firms are structurally-resilient due to their diversified client portfolios, global delivery capabilities, and strong long-term enterprise relationships. Their deep expertise in emerging technologies such as AI, automation, data platforms, and digital governance solutions positions them well to support the region's long-term economic diversification goals.

Meanwhile, Nasscom is closely monitoring the evolving situation in West Asia. As a precautionary measure, it has advised member companies to defer travel to affected areas. Firms have been advised to enable work-from-home arrangements for employees in the region.

Industrial output growth slips to 4.8% in January as manufacturing decelerates

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India's industrial production growth declined to 4.8% in January, from a robust 8% expansion recorded in the previous month, as manufacturing activities decelerated, following the ramp-up for the festive season, official data showed on Monday.

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation revised upward December industrial output growth data to 8%, from 7.8% reported in the provisional estimate. The December growth was the best in 26 months.

The cumulative growth in the factory output measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) stood at 4% in the April-January period of the current fiscal.

Manufacturing output growth decelerated from 8.4% in December, to a three-month low of 4.8% in January.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the decline in manufacturing output growth is due to an "adverse base as well as some slowdown in output expansion following the ramp-up for the festive season and subsequent restocking, amid the prevailing tariff-related uncertainties".

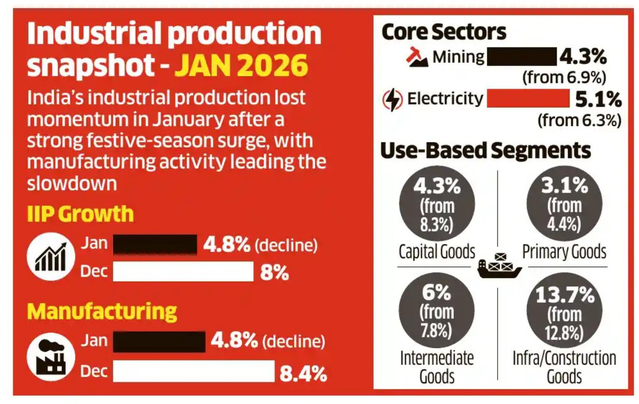
Five of the six use-based segments witnessed deterioration in their year-on-year performance in January 2026, compared to December 2025, barring infrastructure/construction goods, which posted double-digit growth for the third consecutive month.

The consumer non-durables segment reverted to the contractionary territory in January 2026, after expanding by a strong 8-8.5% in each of the last two months.

The deceleration was broad-based, with all the three production-based segments recording a slower growth in January 2026, compared to the previous month. Mining output growth decelerated to 4.3% in January from 6.9% in December, while growth in electricity production softened from 6.3% in December to 5.1% in January. Within consumer durables, growth in the automobile-related segments normalised after rising sharply in the third quarter following the rationalisation of the GST and festive demand.

Growth in capital goods softened to 4.3% in January from 8.3% December, primary goods to 3.1% from 4.4%, and intermediate goods to 6% from 7.8%.

However, infrastructure and construction goods output edged up to 13.7% in January from 12.8% in December. "The Centre's continued push towards capex-led growth, alongside early signs of a revival in private capex, bodes well for the investment outlook," said Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings.


Industrial production snapshot - JAN 2026
India's industrial production lost momentum in January after a strong festive-season surge, with manufacturing activity leading the slowdown
IIP Growth
Jan 4.8% (decline)
Dec 8%
Manufacturing
Jan 4.8% (decline)
Dec 8.4%
Core Sectors
Mining 4.3% (from 6.9%)
Electricity 5.1% (from 6.3%)
Use-Based Segments
4.3% (from 8.3%) Capital Goods
3.1% (from 4.4%) Primary Goods
6% (from 7.8%) Intermediate Goods
13.7% (from 12.8%) Infra/Construction Goods

KARNATAKA HOUSING BOARD
3rd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Karnataka Housing Board invite tender from the eligible Pre qualified contractors & willing to Pre qualify in Karnataka Housing Board through Karnataka public procurement portal for the below mentioned work

Name of the work : Composite Housing Scheme in Sy no.200/1 at Varamballi Village, Bramhawara Taluk, Udupi district in an extent of 6 Acres. **Work Indent No.**: KHB/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT 714 & IFT No.157/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026. **Amount put to tender:** Rs.5,38,03,438/-.

Last date for submission of bid: 23.03.2026 upto 4.00 PM

For further information, contact below mentioned office address: Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Cauvery Bhavan, Bengaluru. Telephone No: 080-22273511/080-22100077, Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Karnataka Housing Board, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/5927/AKAR/2025-26

HUBBALLI - DHARWAD BRTS COMPANY LTD.
(CIN : U60200KA2021SGCO63887)
Directorate of Urban Land Transport, B Block Building, 2nd Floor, NWKRTC Bus Terminal, Near New Court Road, PO; Vidyanagar, Hosur, Hubballi - 580021. Phone : 0836-2222007/08, E-mail : hdbrts@gmail.com

No: HDBRTS/FIN/TENDER-IA/2025-26/593
Date: 02/03/2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

Hubballi-Dharwad BRTS Company Limited invites call bids from the **Chartered Accountants' firms for the services of Internal Audit Functions for F.Y. 2026-27** through e-procurement portal **http://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** The details will be available on the e-portal from **03-03-2026** and the last date to submit the bid is **16-03-2026 at 17.00 hrs.** The interested CA firms meeting the eligibility criteria may participate in the e-bidding process. For any clarifications the bidders may contact the office at above telephone numbers.

Sd/- Managing Director, Hubballi - Dharwad BRTS Company Ltd., Hubballi.

DIPR/Dharwad/1296/Manipal/2025-26

BANGALORE UNIVERSITY
Pareeksha Bhavana, Jnana Bharathi Campus, Bengaluru- 560 056

No: BU/E-Gov/Tenders-ADV-02:2025-26 Date: 02.03.2026

E-Tender Notification

Bangalore University invites bids for the following tender through Karnataka Public procurement Portal. Details of the tender are available at e-procurement platform **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. Bids are to be submitted electronically at **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. Bidders are requested to adhere to the time schedule prescribed in the tender.

Sl. No.	Description of the Tender
1	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Scanners to enhance Scanning-Center for Digital Valuation System (DVS)

Sd/- Registrar (Evaluation)

DIPR/CP/5925/AKAR/2025-26

Department of Health & Family Welfare
KARNATAKA STATE BLOOD TRANSFUSION COUNCIL
Arogya Soudha, Magadi Road 1st Cross, Leprosy Hospital Premises, Bengaluru - 560023.
Phone 080-29557022/21 Email: ddbloodsafety.ksaps@gmail.com

No: KSBTC/BTS/08/2025-26 Date: 27.02.2026

NOTIFICATION

Subject : Walk -In- Interview for the various posts under KSBTC
Reference:ಕರಾರಚಾಪ/ಬಿಟಿಎಸ್/08/2025-26, Dated 27-02-2026.

The Karnataka State Blood Transfusion Council (KSBTC) invites eligible candidates for Walk In interview for the various vacant posts for Blood Safety Programme. Selected candidates will have a written test. The posts are temporary and purely on contract basis. Guidelines, Salary and other details are published in **https://ksaps.karnataka.gov.in website.** Walk – In Interview has been scheduled on **12/03/2026 @ 11.00 AM,** In the office of Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society, 4th Floor, East wing, Arogya Soudha, Magadi Road, 1st Cross, Bengaluru 560023.

Sd/-
Director,
Karnataka State Blood Transfusion Council, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/5923/KAVITA/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ರಾಯಚೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ
E-mail:itstaff_ulb_raichura@yahoo.com Website:-www.raichurcity.gov.in
Phone No:08532-226768 Fax No:08532-226316

ಸಂ.ರಾಮಪ/ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ/ಕಾ/ಅ/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:27–02–2026.

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ 2.0 ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ).

ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿಯಪಡಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ, ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನ ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ತೋರಿಸಿದ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ನಂಬರ ಸರಬರಾಜು / ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ 2.0 ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಸದರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಇಚ್ಚಿಸುವ ಅರ್ಹ ಸರಬರಾಜು / ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು WWW.KPPP.Karnataka.gov.in ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸತಕ್ಕದ್ದು, ಹಾಗೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ WWW.raichurcity. mrc.gov.in ರಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ	ಅನುದಾನದ ವಿವರ	ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ	ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ನಂಬರ
1	2025–26 ಎಸ್.ಎಫ್.ಸಿ (ಮುಕ್ತ) & ಮಹಾ ನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನ	ನಗರದ ವಾರ್ಡ್ ನಂ 01 ರಿಂದ 35 ವರೆಗೆ 90 ವ್ಯಾಟ್ಸ್ ಎಲ್.ಇ.ಡಿ ಲೈಟ್ ಅಳವಡಿಸುವುದು. Estimate Cost Rs. 50,00,000/-	DMA/2025-26/ EL/ WORK_ INDENT55631
2	2024–25 & 2022–23 15ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು (ನಿರ್ಬಂಧಿತ) ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Supplying of Tractors for 6000 Liters Capacity Water Tankers to Supply Water At City Corporation Raichur Limit. **Estimate Cost Rs.65,09,000/-**	DMA/2025-26/ IND6016
3	2023–24 15ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು (ನಿರ್ಬಂಧಿತ) ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Providing and fixing of DI specials, Sluice Valve Air Valve DI Flanged Pipe to Chicksugur WTP to Raichur City in Raichur City. **Estimate Cost Rs.34,27,000.00**	DMA/2025-26/ WS/ WORK_ INDENT55741
4	2021–22 & 2024–25 15ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು (ನಿರ್ಬಂಧಿತ) ಅನುದಾನದಲ್ಲಿ	Providing and Fixing of Chlorinator in Water Treatment Plants Under the Jurisdiction of Raichur City. **Estimate Cost Rs.77,44,340/-**	DMA/2025-26/ WS/ WORK_ INDENT55740
5	ಸಿ.ಎಸ್.ಆರ್ & ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ ಅನುದಾನದಲಿ	Installation of High mast Lights at OPEC-Rajeev Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital and Raichur Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) **Estimate Cost Rs.19,50,000/-**	DMA/2025-26/ OW/ WORK_ INDENT55848

DIP/RCR/733/KSMCA/736/2025-26

ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಮಹಾನಗರ ಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ರಾಯಚೂರು.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
DIVISION KOPPAL. Phone No:08539-222318.email:eepwdkpl2@gmail.com

IFT No. PWD:DK:TDR: KW-1,2,3&4:2025-26:4385 Date: 26-02-2026.

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

The Executive Engineer, Public works Department Division Koppal invites tenders from the eligible tenderers as per standard bid documents on http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Portal. Head of Account : 2059-80-053-4-00-200 Departmental Buildings Mentaiance, 2216-07—053-00-01-200 PWD & Judicial Quarters Maintenance, 4059-80-051-0-60-422 CMIDP, KKRDB Interst Amount-General & 5054-SH Bridge Improvement/2025-26. Two cover Tender procedure as per Rule 28 of the KTPP Act shall be followed. For more information the contractor can contact the under signed during office hours on Phone No. 08539 – 222318 and all informations regarding tenders can be had from website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Total No of Works:10 (Work Indent No: 32887, 33298, 33270, 33290, 33288, 33950, 29802/CALL-4, 33276, 33490 & 32898) invited. Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders : **09-03-2026** Time 16.00, Sl.No. 1 to 6 Date of Financial Bid opening : **10-03-2026** Time 16.30 Sl.No. 7 to 10 Date of Technical Bid opening **10-03-2026** Time 16.30, Sl.No. 7 to 10 Date of Financial Bid opening **12-03-2026** Time 11:00. Minimum & Maximum Estimate Amount Rs. 1.50 Lakhs & Rs. 450.00 Lakhs respectively.. The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website address, EMD, Time for Tender, Reservation Queries/Clarification, Date of Financial Bid Opening, Date & Other information as mentioned in KPPP Portal. any changes either in tender date or any other condition tenderers can view in http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal.

DIPR/Koppal/718/KSMCA/2025-26 **Sd/- EE, PWD Division, Koppal**

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Tenders are invited for 11 KV link line works pertaing to Jigani ,Chandapura and Veeasandra sub Divisions in Chandapura Division of Ramanagara Circle on "Total Turnkey basis on Rate Contract Basis" of BESCOM.

Sl No	Enq. No. & Date	Name of the work	Aprox. Amount put to Tender in Rs. Lakhs
1	SEE/ RMGC / TTK RC- Link Line / Jigani 302 Dt: 27.02.2026..	Running link line using 3X400 Sqmm XLPE UG cable for bifurcation of overloaded F1 Jigani 66 KV Jigani old MUSS to F17 Adhi Shakati yallamma feeder of 66 KV Jigani old MUSS from Jigani BESCOM O & M to Jigani Main BUS STOP for distance 0.25 Rkms in Jigani Link Road O & M Unit of Jigani Sub division.	9.037
2	SEE/ RMGC / TTK RC- Link Line / CDP-303 Dt: 27.02.2026	Running 11 KV link line using 400 Sqmm XLPE UG cable for bifurcate the load from over loded F22 feeder from 220/66/11kV Yarandahalli MUSS on to 11KV F14 Kachanaikanahalli feeder of 220/66/11 kV yarandahalli MUSS to a distance of 0.3 Rkms to avoid overloading of F22 feeder and F14 feeder limits in Chandapura section of Chandapura sub division	11.139
3	SEE/ RMGC / TTK RC- Link Line / VEER-305 Dt: 27.02.2026.	Running 11 KV link line using 400 Sq mm XLPE UG Cable for change over the load of F3 & F12 feeder from 66/11 KV Chandapura MUSS to a distance of 0.25 Rkms in Ananthanagara section of Veerasandra Sub division	8.644

The Bid available from **04.03.2026** and Last date for submitting the bids is **18.03.2026 up to 16.00 Hrs.** All the payments such as tender cost, EMD etc. shall be made through e-payment mode. For details, please visit website: kpppusers@Karnataka.gov.in

All the payments such as tender cost, EMD etc. shall be made through e-payment mode. Further any clarification contact help desk 09240214000 &,09240214001 or E-mail: **support@eprochelpdesk.com** and **080-23500164 or 9449844798.**

For Electricity Related Complaints Call: 1912
Download BESCOM MITHRA Mobile App.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (El), Ramanagara Circle, Kengeri BESCOM.

Do innovation labs bridge gender gaps in schools?

ANURAG GUPTA

When a government school in Rajasthan set up its first robotics lab, the inaugural batch had 32 students. Only five were girls.

Six months later, during an internal robotics challenge, two of those five girls led their teams. One of them had initially refused to even touch the hardware kit, convinced that "circuits are for boys." What changed was not the infrastructure alone, but the ecosystem around it.

Across India, schools are rapidly investing in robotics labs, AI classrooms, tinkering spaces, and innovation hubs. Under initiatives like the Atal Innovation Mission and its Atal Tinkering Labs, thousands of schools now have access to structured maker spaces. On paper, access to infrastructure has expanded significantly. But the larger question remains: Does infrastructure automatically translate into equal participation?

The participation gap is real

According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), women now account for nearly half of total higher education enrolment in India. However, when we narrow this to engineering and technology streams, female enrolment drops significantly. The gap widens further in advanced fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and core electronics.

At the school level, the pattern begins much earlier.

In multiple schools we have observed, enrolment in innovation labs is usually gender-balanced when participation is mandatory. But when projects become competitive, voluntary, or time-intensive, such as robotics competitions or coding clubs, girls' participation often declines. This indicates that infrastructure may open the door, but culture determines who walks in and stays.

Insufficient infrastructure

In a Tier-2 CBSE school in Madhya Pradesh, the robotics lab was well-equipped. Yet, during open lab hours, boys occupied most of the equipment. Girls preferred working on documentation or presentation slides. Teachers later admitted that they unconsciously assigned hardware roles to boys and creative or reporting roles to girls.

When the school consciously rotated responsibilities, mandating that every student handle wiring, coding, assembling, and presenting participation patterns shifted within a term. Girls began experimenting more confidently with tools. One student who had initially chosen "design only" later represented the school at a state-level robotics showcase.

The lesson was clear: access without structured inclusion reproduces existing biases.

Classroom dynamics

Research globally, including studies cited by UNESCO, shows that girls' participation in STEM is strongly influenced by classroom climate, teacher expectations, and representation. When teachers model equal technical expectations and celebrate problem-solving over speed or aggression, girls' retention increases.

In several schools, we observed that girls responded particularly well to project-based challenges set in real-life contexts, such as designing a smart irrigation model for local farms or building safety alert systems. Contextual relevance appeared to reduce intimidation and increase ownership.

Interestingly, when robotics and AI were introduced through storytelling and problem-solving rather than technical jargon, initial hesitation among girls reduced significantly.

Impact of role models and visibility

In one school in Haryana, participation in the innovation lab rose sharply after a female alumna pursuing engineering returned to mentor students. Her presence shifted perception more than any new equipment did.

Exposure matters. When girls see women coding, building hardware, or leading tech projects, the idea of belonging in that space becomes tangible.

Several schools have also experimented with girls-only introductory workshops, not to segregate permanently, but to create safe entry spaces. Once confidence is built, mixed teams function more equitably.

Data from the ground

Across schools where structured lab integration was implemented, meaning labs were embedded into the curriculum rather than treated as extracurricular add-ons, we observed up to a 20–30% increase in sustained female participation over two academic years.

However, in schools where labs remained optional clubs without mentoring frameworks, gender ratios remained largely unchanged.

This suggests that innovation labs can indeed shift participation patterns, but only when accompanied by:

- Teacher sensitisation
- Rotational task allocation
- Contextual project design
- Visible female role models
- Long-term mentoring rather than one-time exposure

Perhaps the most telling shift is not enrolment, but confidence.

In a Bengaluru school, a Class 8 student who once hesitated to switch on a soldering iron now leads peer training sessions. Her parents later shared that she now speaks about pursuing engineering, something she had never considered before exposure to hands-on STEM.

Infrastructure, in this sense, acts as a catalyst. But transformation happens when psychological barriers are addressed alongside physical ones.

Innovation labs change participation patterns, but not automatically. Robotics labs and AI classrooms can democratise access. They can disrupt stereotypes. They can give girls a first touchpoint with tools historically perceived as male-dominated. But without conscious design, they risk becoming sophisticated rooms that mirror existing inequities.

The real shift happens when infrastructure is paired with intentional pedagogy.

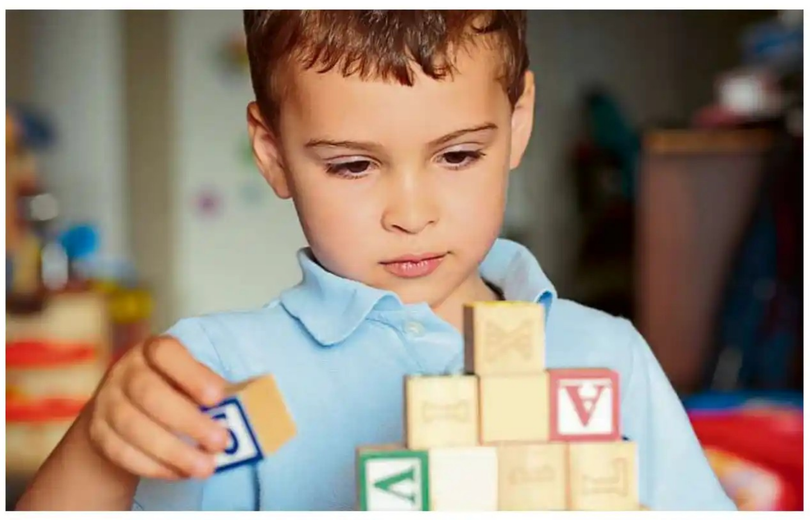
As India expands its innovation ecosystem under national education reforms, the next phase must move beyond building labs to building inclusive cultures within those labs. Only then will participation patterns not just change temporarily, but evolve sustainably.

Because in the end, machines do not create equity. Mindsets do.

(The author is the co-founder of a company that sets up Atal Tinkering Labs)

Too young for a costly race

John J Kennedy writes about the dilemma of spending lakhs of rupees on the education of a three-year-old



School admissions have begun at many institutions, while in some 'progressive' elite schools, the process may already be complete. Amid this frenzy, the sad plight of parents and their little ones deserves attention. Across India's cities and rapidly growing towns, a child's first step into education has become one of the most stressful experiences for parents and families.

Nursery admissions, meant for children barely three years old, now resemble an obstacle race marked by uncertainty, competition, and exorbitantly rising costs. Expectation of a smooth introduction to childhood learning has become an exhausting test of emotional resilience and financial capability. From the metropolises and the numerous Tier-2 towns, parents describe the process in strikingly similar terms. They say rules appear clear but confusing in practice.

Of course, schools publish admission criteria, make forms available online, and even announce timelines, but the uncertainty and unpredictability of the outcomes make parents anxious. So, many families often apply to multiple schools, track deadlines obsessively, calculate distances and eligibility points, and rely as much on luck as on planning.

It's also true that parents approach nursery admissions with various expectations. Some prioritise safety and care; others, perhaps, values or discipline. Almost everyone seeks early exposure to English, social interaction, or an environment where their child will "fit in". Schools, on the other hand, operate within a dense web of regulations, court directives, parental demands, and, above all, competitive pressures. Consequently, we have a system that seems transparent, at least on paper, but parents are worried.

Cost of education

Additionally, the rising cost of nursery education is a grave concern. Annual fees run into tens of thousands of rupees. When transport, uniforms, books, activities, and various "optional" charges are added, the total cost over two or three years can stretch into several lakhs. For middle-class families already coping with housing costs, healthcare, and daily living expenses, this is a severe burden.

Of course, school managements justify these fees by pointing to rising operational costs: land prices, infrastructure, safety requirements, teacher salaries, compliance norms, and technology. Valid arguments. Quality education requires trained teachers. Safe spaces are mandatory. And these need resources. However, the flip side is that nursery education is viewed by many school managements as very lucrative. Hence, branding, air-conditioned classrooms, glossy campuses, and promises of "international" exposure are aggressively marketed to anxious parents, turning early education into a high-stakes consumer choice.

All this raises uncomfortable questions: does it make sense to spend lakhs of rupees on the education of a three-year-old? At what point does providing a service slip into exploiting parental insecurity? When early schooling begins to resemble a corporate product rather than a developmental space, the line between care and commerce obviously blurs.

Silent propagation of inequality

In this sordid saga, do not overlook how the admissions process quietly reinforces inequality. Parents with digital access and English-language proficiency can navigate easily. But those in the informal sector, migrants, and first-generation learners feel overwhelmed, as they see the entire process as intimidating and exclusionary. No doubt the system rewards cultural and social capital. Knowing how criteria are interpreted, which documents matter, or which schools to prioritise becomes an invisible advantage. Sadly, access to education begins not with learning, but with the ability to manage complexity.

Hence, the emotional toll many parents experience is considerable. Some parents apply to multiple schools, anticipating rejections. Sadly, for the parents and the child, anxiety sets in even before schooling starts. For both, what should have been an exciting moment becomes, unfortunately, a prolonged period of stress.

Let us not forget that the children at the centre of this process are toddlers. Yet they are taken to multiple school visits, exposed to adult anxiety and, at times, subtle forms of evaluation. Even in the absence of formal testing, the atmosphere of competition seeps in.

Nursery education, we must acknowledge, occupies a particularly sensitive space because it deals with very young children and deeply held parental hopes. Against this backdrop, the larger question therefore becomes unavoidable: is early schooling still a public service shaped by care and development, or has it become a marketplace driven by fear and aspiration?

Ironically, multiple regulations alone have not resolved this tension. Rules are frequently changed; criteria are often revised by governmental agencies, and even the courts intervene at times. However, parental anxiety always remains constant. Why? Perhaps we need to understand that the issue is not just procedural but also conceptual.

If all the stakeholders approach nursery education as a shared, child-centric space and discard the notions of race and competition, there could be some relief for parents. Until that happens, schooling will begin with stress and spending, certainly not learning.

(The author is a former professor and former dean of a university in Bengaluru)

BULLETIN BOARD

SBI Youth for India fellowship

Applications are open for the 14th batch of the 13-month SBI Youth for India Fellowship, a rural development programme. Candidates must complete a bachelor's degree by 4 October 2026 and be aged 21–32 years (born between August 4, 1994 and 5 October 5, 2005). The fellowship is open to Indian citizens, OCIs, NRIs, citizens of Nepal and Bhutan, and SBI employees. The selection process includes an online assessment followed by a group exercise and personal interaction. Last date: March 31. Apply at: https://register.youthforindia.org/

Applications invited

Applications are open for the 5th batch of the MSc in Environmental Studies (Conservation Practice), jointly offered by ATREE and TDU, which combines ecology, environmental science, economics, sociology and conservation ethics, with hands-on fieldwork, practical training, expert mentorship and access to research facilities. Graduates from diverse backgrounds can pursue careers in NGOs, corporate sustainability, academia and government agencies. An information webinar for prospective applicants will be held on March 3. Apply at: https://www.atree.org/msc-programme

Content writing internship

Megaminds IT Services is hiring a content writer (research associate in computer science) intern who can work from home. Students with knowledge of Adobe After Effects, Figma, Graphic Design, Motion Graphics, Video Editing, Videography, and Visual Design can apply by March 27. The stipend is Rs 8,000-15,000 / month. Apply at: https://tinyurl.com/bddtjxsp.

WordPress internship

Unicorn Digitals is hiring a WordPress development intern who can work from home. Students with knowledge of CSS and WordPress can apply by March 27. The stipend is Rs 5,000 / month. Apply at: https://tinyurl.com/yw44b3wm.

Graphic design internship

Cubelelo.com is hiring a graphic design intern in Bengaluru. Students with knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Canva, and CorelDRAW can apply by March 27. The stipend is Rs 8,000-10,000/month. Apply at: https://tinyurl.com/3zxykrpx.

Digital marketing internship

Brandshark is hiring a digital marketing intern in Bengaluru. Students with knowledge of Digital Marketing, Facebook Ads, Facebook Marketing, Google AdWords, Instagram Marketing, Performance Marketing, Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimization can apply by March 26. The stipend is Rs 10,000 /month. Apply at: https://shorturl.at/Q034Q.

ASK THE COUNSELLOR

How to choose the career path?

Q: I am a 1st PUC student with PCMB, scoring around 95% in my state board — I previously scored 94.4% in ICSE and a perfect 100 in Computer Applications, all through self-study. My career priorities are work-life balance, strong entry-level pay, and roles centred on physics, mathematics, or computers. I came across quantitative trading and it aligns with my interests, but online accounts of brutal work hours and job insecurity make me wonder if years of hard work will actually pay off. How do I choose the right path?

Neelashree, Bengaluru

Dear student,

Your academic record and self-driven approach speak well for your future. That said, resist anchoring your career choice to either starting salary or current job-market trends — both shift constantly over what will be a 40–50 year working life. High early pay without sustained interest rarely holds. Instead, identify careers where your genuine aptitude and skills intersect with your curiosity. The money follows naturally from excellence.

On quantitative trading specifically: don't let unverified online commentary shape your decisions. It is a demanding field, but no more unforgiving than any other high-performance profession — and those who are well-suited to it thrive. The real question is not whether you can survive it, but whether your strengths genuinely point toward it.

If they do, the path is well-defined. At your stage, focus on building a strong foundation in mathematics — particularly calculus, statistics, and linear algebra — and sharpen your programming skills in Python or C++, both industry staples. When you reach the undergraduate level, target a degree in mathematics, statistics, computer science, or engineering from a reputed institution; IITs and IISc are well-regarded pipelines into this field in India. Alongside your degree, work through platforms like Quantopian, QuantConnect, or Kaggle to build practical exposure to financial modelling and algorithmic problem-solving. Internships at trading firms, banks, or fintech companies during your undergraduate years will sharpen your profile considerably. The most competitive roles at proprietary trading firms — where compensation is highest — typically recruit from strong academic programmes and value demonstrable problem-solving ability above almost everything else.

Your PCMB combination keeps every door open at this stage. Use the remainder of the 1st PUC to honestly assess which roles require skills you already have or can realistically build. Once you have a clearer direction, begin preparing for the relevant entrance exams and aim for a reputed institution — that foundation will matter far more than chasing whichever career happens to be trending.

- Ali Khwaja

Questions? Suggestions? Feedback? Write to us: dheducation@deccanherald.co.in

Do you have it in you to become your own boss?

ALI KHWAJA

Many enthusiastic and active young people, including students, aspire to build start-ups, be self-employed, and earn more, rather than be employed on a fixed salary. Some of them even start planning early, take on some commercial projects, and get a feel for earning money while studying. They are highly influenced by media reports that claim there are over 6 lakh start-ups active in the country. Of these, 89 are reported to have become unicorns, i.e. they have attained a value of more than one billion US Dollars.

Initially, only youngsters in metropolitan cities had such dreams, but now it is estimated that almost 50% of the start-ups originate from Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Overall, it is reported that there has been a 300% increase in start-ups in India in the past 5 years. As expected, the vast majority have been in IT services, with healthcare, life sciences, and education also popular. 73,000 start-ups are reported to have at least one woman director.

The companies that are moving towards becoming unicorns are those that pursue rapid growth, disruptive technology, and large amounts of venture capital. They are people who prioritise rapid expansion over profitability.

Earlier trends in entrepreneurship were mostly people who had worked for a number of years, acquired domain specialisation and experience, and then took the plunge to set up their own business. One of the reasons for this was that before the IT boom, enterprises were capital-intensive, requiring buildings, machinery, stocks and labour. Also, bank loans were very conservative and rarely given to inexperienced people.

Today's start-ups do not necessarily go to banks; they approach Venture Capitalists who invest either in interest-based loans or in profit-sharing equity. Also, many IT and service-sector enterprises do not require substantial funds, as they do not need large offices or factories and do not need to carry stock-in-trade. Venture Capitalists are risk takers who put in money if they are convinced that the promoter has ideas that can be cashed in the short run.

Who should choose entrepreneurship?

Taking an early plunge suits those who do not need a regular income to meet basic needs and can withstand losses for some time. Those who are resilient, adaptable, and can handle ups and downs, unexpected challenges and setbacks have risk-management skills. They need to be visionaries who can visualise things that do not exist. And they should be willing to work long hours, focus on strategy rather than day-to-day operations. They should be people who can not only sell products but also sell themselves.

People-management skills are perhaps the most vital, because all other skills can be obtained by hiring specialists. A person who can analyse the thinking and attitudes of partners, employees, customers and suppliers will be able to overcome other hurdles.

Despite all the above, success will depend on how feasible the business idea is, what scale it needs to operate at, and how it can beat the competition. Those who understand their competitors' plans and strategies can overtake them. Lastly, they should know when to take risks and when not to be foolhardy, able to make critical decisions such as closing down, changing the product line, or moving into something new based on market demands.

Before starting a startup, it is definitely advisable to gain practical work experience in similar organisations. An MBA or PGDBA in entrepreneurship, offered by many reputed B-schools, can also give a boost. Having a partner or two who complements skills is an added advantage. Although entrepreneurship at the degree level is offered by some universities as an elective, it provides only a broad overview and may not equip the student to actually run a business. Nothing can substitute exposure and experience in the corporate world.

The flip side

Let us also look at some realistic data. Despite having the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world, 80–90% of Indian businesses fail within the first five years of operation. The reasons identified by experts include: poor financial management leading to a cash crunch, failure to keep up with technology, and, most importantly, not having the pulse of the people they need to interact with on a regular basis, i.e., their colleagues, employees, financiers, and customers.

Studying case histories of other start-ups, browsing biographies of both successful and unsuccessful businessmen, and learning lessons from even minor threats or setbacks can help prevent failure to a great extent. Even then, an entrepreneur should know when to cut losses and admit defeat, instead of getting deeper and deeper into a financial mess.

An educational-tech company promoted by a charismatic Indian shot to fame a few years back, was valued in the tens of billions of US dollars, and was aiming to become the biggest educational company in the world. It ran into trouble and is now facing lawsuits in the USA. Many skeletons were exposed by former employees who claimed they were coerced into engaging in unethical sales practices. Studying such cases, and not just those who have been consistently successful, teaches you what mistakes not to make.

Among those who spiralled into millions and billions in a short span, many have tumbled, while others sold and got out. On the other hand, there are many others who have taken the slow and steady gait of the Tortoise and are making steady progress. You need to choose between being a hare and a tortoise.

(The author is an education and career counsellor)

Mullanpur to host India's one-off Test against Afghans

NEW DELHI, PTI: Afghanistan will kick off their upcoming tour of India with a one-off Test match, followed by three one-day internationals in June, the BCCI said on Monday.

"Afghanistan will play one Test match followed by a three-match One-Day International (ODI) series. The Test match will be played in New Chandigarh from June 6 to June 10, 2026," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a release. The Test match however is not a part of India's World Test Championship cycle. It is understood that now the white ball focus will shift towards 50 over cricket looking at 2027 World Cup and hence three ODIs have been arranged.

"The ODI series will commence on June 14, 2026, in Dharamshala, with the subsequent matches scheduled in Lucknow (June 17) and Chennai (June 20). All ODI matches will begin at 1:30 PM IST.

Schedule: One-off Test: New Chandigarh, June 6-10; **1st ODI:** Dharamshala, June 14; **2nd ODI:** Lucknow, June 17; **3rd ODI:** Chennai, June 20.

Medvedev holed up in Dubai

PARIS, AFP: A "small number" of tennis players remain stuck in Dubai following a men's tournament last week, owing to the war in the Middle East, the tour's governing body the ATP said on Monday.

Russian Daniil Medvedev, who won the singles title on Saturday, is among those who have been unable to leave the city because of the attacks from Iranian missiles and drones.

"The health, safety and well-being of our players, staff and tournament personnel is our priority," the ATP said in a statement published on X, formerly Twitter.

IN BRIEF

Chinmay spell inspires MSRIT A to victory

▸ MS Ramaiah Institute of Technology A (MSRIT A) defeated RV College of Engineering (RVCE) by 88 runs in the Dr MS Ramaiah Memorial state-level inter-engineering colleges cricket tournament at the SMVIT ground, reports DHNS.

Brief scores: MSRIT A: 194/9 in 30 overs (Chinmay 66, Vishnu 44, Kotra 4-42, Manav 2-27) bt RVCE: 106 all out in 25.2 overs (Pratyush 38, Rishab 15, Chinmay 4-9, Sricharan 3-29).

MSRIT B: 120 all out in 27.4 overs (Ayush 27, Amith 25; Gaurav 3-21, Susheel 3-21) lt to DSCE: 121/4 in 18.4 overs (Rohith 68, Vivek 25, Vikas 2-13).

Atiqa finishes on podium

▸ Racing prodigy Atiqa Mir has created history by becoming the first Indian to secure a podium finish in the highly-competitive European leg of the COTFA karting series, reports PTI from Valencia.

The 11-year-old racer finished third in the final of the opening round in the Champions of the Future Academy (COTFA) series. The result over the weekend was also Atiqa's biggest success since moving from the mini to the OKNJ (junior) category.

Atiqa, who is the first Indian to be supported by the F1 Academy, also recorded the fastest lap.

◆ ON TV ◆

FOOTBALL

EPL: Brighton vs Arsenal, Bournemouth vs Brentford, Everton vs Burnley **(1 am, Wednesday)**, Wolves vs Liverpool **(1:45 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHotstar**.

BADMINTON

All England Open: Round of 32 **(3:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 2**, **JioHotstar**.

Stranded Sindhu all but out; Lakshya set for tough test

BIRMINGHAM, PTI

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu is set to miss the All England Championships starting here on Tuesday after being stranded in Dubai amid the US bombing of Iran and the resultant air space closure in the Gulf region.

Travel disruptions have marred the build-up to the Super 1000 event, with Sindhu stuck in Dubai since Saturday after flights were suspended amid following US and Israeli strikes on Iran and the subsequent retaliation by Tehran

Sindhu and her team, including Indonesian coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama, had a narrow escape after an explosion near their place of stay. They were subsequently moved to a secure location as tensions flared across the Gulf.

The Indian ace was scheduled to face Thailand's Supanida Katethong in the opening round but with Dubai airspace and airport continuing to be closed, she will be forced to pull out of the tournament.

BWF is also keeping a close watch, maintaining "real-time oversight of the situation and stand ready to assist delegations experiencing delays or route changes."

"This includes reviewing and preparing potential contingencies within the competition schedule should any players experience delayed arrival," it said.

While Sindhu's participation remains uncertain, some of her fellow shuttlers have managed to reach Birmingham via alternate routes of Singapore and Africa. However, it remains to be seen how the long and taxing travel will impact their preparations.

PV Sindhu

Lakshya Sen

LIVE 3:30 PM, STAR SPORTS

India's top men's singles contender Lakshya Sen and rising youngster Ayush Shetty, have reached without any travel issues. While Lakshya has drawn world No. 1 Shi Yu Qi of China, Ayush is up against Indonesia's Alwi Farhan in the opening round.

For Lakshya, a former semi-finalist and runner-up here, it will be another tough test against Shi, against whom he has lost four of his five previous meetings against the Chinese.

Ayush, the US Open Super 300 champion, will look to turn the tide against Farhan, having lost three of their five encounters, including the most recent one at the Indonesia Masters in January.

In women's singles, Malvika Bansod faces a stiff opening challenge against Tokyo Olympics champion Chen Yufei of China.

Unnati Hooda, whose flight was cancelled on Sunday forcing her to travel via Africa, will need to overcome jet lag when she takes on Thailand's eighth seed Pornpawee Chochuwong in her opener.

In men's doubles, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, a former world No. 1 and two-time World Championships bronze medallists, will spearhead India's challenge against Malaysia's Kang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai in the first round.

The women's doubles pair Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, who registered back-to-back semifinal finishes at the event in 2022 and 2023, will face Japan's Sayaka Hirota and Ayako Sakuramoto.

In mixed doubles, Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto are up against Malaysia's Hoo Pang Ron and Cheng Su Yin, while Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde will meet fifth seeds Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue of France.

Prakash Padukone (1980) and Pullela Gopichand (2001) remain the only Indians to have won the All England title.

CRICKET

BCCI's CoE approaches Harbhajan for spin camp

Zaheer already in Bengaluru for 5-day camp with pacers

KOLKATA, PTI

Former India greats Zaheer Khan and Harbhajan Singh have been approached by the BCCI for specialised camps at the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru with the "Targetted Players" asked to attend them.

The list of the targeted players is prepared by the BCCI on the basis of potential senior India prospects who have done well at the age group and first class levels, and have also played for India A and, may be, a few games for senior team.

Former left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan is already in Bengaluru for a five-day camp with the young pacers who could be knocking the doors of senior side or have played a few games for them. It is learnt that the COE's Head of Cricket VVS Laxman approached his former teammates for specialised camps — four to five days — to help the Gen-Next of Indian cricket match ready.

"Laxman approached Zaheer, Harbhajan and Anil Kumble for specialised camps. Bhajji is trying to work out the dates for four-five day 'Off-spinners' camp'. He is looking forward to help the upcoming prospects who have done well at the age-group and India A level and work with them. This is a welcome initiative where those who have played 100 plus Tests for India are sharing their experiences with Gen-Next," a BCCI source privy to development said on conditions of anonymity.

Former Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh is working out on a prospect of 4-5 day camp with young off-spinners at the BCCI's CoE in Bengaluru after being approached by CoE's Head of Cricket VVS Laxman. DH FILE PHOTO

There is a chance that Anil Kumble, the highest Indian wicket taker across Tests and One-Day Internationals, has been requested to hold a wrist spinners' camp.

It is understood that the specialised camps will be held before the start of the Indian Premier League as lot of these players will have to link up with their respective IPL teams. Inviting former greats for specialised camps at the erstwhile NCA started at the time when Jagmohan Dalmiya took charge as BCCI chief.

The likes of Chandu Borde, Erapalli Prasanna, Syed Kirmani have all coached and shared their knowledge with youngsters at various Zonal Cricket Academy (ZCA) camps back in the day.

Pace bowling coaches

Former India pacers VRV Singh and Srinath Aravind are among the prominent names who have applied for pace bowling coach's job at the Centre of Excellence.

These are permanent staff positions and VRV and Aravind have both worked at various age group camps at the COE. Both have also completed their various BCCI Level courses.

With the departure of Englishman Troy Cooley, who has attained the age of 60 years, the BCCI is also in search of head of pace bowling at the COE.

For the spin bowling department, former India bowler Sunil Joshi is currently at the helm.

Asiad selection criteria shuts door on Vinesh

Skipping national events and camps prove costly

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has set the selection criteria for the Asian Games in Japan later this year, stipulating that all medal winners from the 2025 Senior National Championships and 2026 Federation Cup are eligible for selection trials.

The eligibility criteria are set for all 18 Olympic weight categories in men's and women's freestyle and Greco-Roman, effectively ending Vinesh Phogat's bid for a comeback.

The WFI further stated that the new selection policy requires "wrestlers to attend national camps to be eligible for national selection. It prohibits wrestlers from training independently and mandates Olympic Games quota-winning athletes to participate in a final one-bout selection trial".

Vinesh, the 2018 Asiad champion, missed both the Nationals and Federation Cup and has not been part of any national camp since her U-turn from retirement late last year.

Having announced her retirement from wrestling following her disqualification from the gold medal match at the Paris Olympics, the 31-year-old has kept her whereabouts on training venue under wraps ever since her return.

Meanwhile the Asiad selection policy also mentioned that junior wrestlers, who bagged medals at the U-20 and U-23 Nationals (if held before the trials) are also eligible for the selection trials.

Wrestler Vinesh Phogat had recently come out of her retirement. PTI FILE PHOTO

Grapplers stuck

Meanwhile, 16 Indian wrestlers, along with WFI support staff, are stuck in the Albanian capital Tirana since the medal rounds of the Muhamet Malo wrestling event got over there on Sunday. The wrestlers were supposed to fly out to India via Dubai but the flight was cancelled due to the escalating situation in the Middle East.

WFI president Sanjay Singh, however, confirmed to *DH* that the wrestlers would land in New Delhi on March 5, as an alternative route for the contingent has been booked.

"The entire team is kept safe and happy in Tirana. They will fly out from there tomorrow and will reach New Delhi via Istanbul and Almaty (Kazakhstan). We wanted to bring them off before Holi, but such is the international situation that we couldn't manage it," said Singh.

Meanwhile the Indian women's wrestling coach Manjeet said that the team is staying in a hotel near the airport in Tirana and thanked WFI and the Indian government for their quick help and support.

ONE FOR THE FUTURE

Precocious Smaran lives up to the hype, raises hope

Karnataka batter emerges Ranji season's highest run-getter

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Over the last five months of Ranji Trophy cricket, you might have watched Smaran R bat under pressure, in conditions conducive for fast bowling, on surfaces helpful for spinners, and on flat decks. And you would be forgiven for thinking that batting in domestic cricket is an easy job.

Barring a couple of innings where he failed to cash in on, he looked in complete control of his game with season's aggregate of 950 runs at an average of 86.36 sat comfortably against his name.

However, those runs did not come easily. They largely came from hitting balls over and over when no camera lenses were on him.

"During the off-season, I prefer a lot of volume because as cricketers playing in India, we get a very short off-season to work on various aspects of our game and I am happy that it is coming together," Smaran tells *DH*.

The left-hander came into his second season with a lot of promise and as the next big thing in Karnataka cricket after top-scoring the run-charts for the State with 516 runs at an average of 64.50 in his debut season.

The 22-year-old has backed up the hype with a mountain of runs, scoring two double hundreds and four tons, finishing the competition as the highest run-getter.

Smaran also makes an attractive package - a textbook southpaw who has all the shots in his book and knows when to bring them out. However, the best part his game is his belief.

"The belief (to be the best) was always there right from the beginning," Smaran tells you.

"Each practice session was towards excelling in the red-ball format. My goal in the beginning of the season was to get either 1000 runs or stay at the top. Fell short by 50 runs, but I remained on top. Glad I could achieve my goal."

In a season dotted with superlative shows by Karnataka batters, Smaran R stood apart by piling a mountain of runs. DH FILE PHOTO

Across 14 innings, there were no lulls when he was at the crease. And he knows throwing his wicket away once he settles in is a crime. That hunger for runs, he says, has come from trusting the process and winning over his mind while in the middle.

"Every time I bat, the one thing that enters my mind is to not throw my wicket away. I just want to put my head down and score runs. I keep telling myself that the only way I will get out is for a good ball."

Smaran also added he sought quite a bit of time from his coach Syed Zabiualla and Karnataka head coach Yere Goud discussing his red-ball batting.

"A lot of credit goes to my coach Syed (Zabiullah) sir. A lot of conversations with Yere (Goud) sir as well. Both of them emphasise on batting big and long because we are in a country where many do well. So the only way to differentiate yourself from others is to score a mountain of runs as and when you get the opportunities," he offers.

Smaran's greatest asset is his game awareness, and from the start he knew what he had to prioritise.

"Emphasis was given towards red-ball cricket. Since you have a lot of time out there in the middle, you usually tend to play along the ground. But at the same time, you try to put pressure on the bowlers whenever required to push the fielders back, especially the spinners."

And guess what? His two double hundreds (227 n.o. vs Chandigarh and 220 vs Kerala) came in two spin-friendly conditions in Hubballi and Mangalapuram.

Smaran has started with a bang, and has lived up to his hype and potential so far. But the evolving Smaran wants to take it to the next step: Winning the Ranji Trophy.

"I think the only difference between the elite and the guys who don't make it is the mindset. So I'm glad that I could stay at the top of the runs and I feel that it's just the start and still have a long way to go. I have to keep scoring runs and more importantly help my team win the Ranji Trophy."

With Karnataka duties done for the season and one of his goals ticked, Smaran already has his mind on another: Win the IPL with Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"Very excited to join the camp. Whatever role is given to me by the team, I will try to do it at my best capacity and hopefully we can win. That's the main goal."

Arsenal's Jurrien Timber

Arsenal outwit Chelsea in set-piece battle

LONDON, AFP: Arsenal won their set-piece battle with 10-man Chelsea as Jurrien Timber sealed the Premier League leaders' crucial 2-1 victory over their London rivals on Sunday.

Mikel Arteta's side struck twice from corners and also conceded from the same route in a match that underlined the increasing importance of set-pieces in the Premier League.

William Saliba's first goal since December 2024 put Arsenal ahead in the first half at the Emirates Stadium.

Piero Hincapie's own goal drew Chelsea level from one of Reece James' deadly corners just before the break.

But Timber won a priceless three points for Arsenal with his second-half header before Chelsea winger Pedro Neto was sent off for a second booking.

The Gunners' second successive league win re-established their five-point lead over second-placed Manchester City, who have a game in hand and had closed the gap with a 1-0 victory at Leeds on Saturday.

After enduring scathing criticism of their mentality during a recent wobble that breathed new life into the title race, Arsenal have got back on track just in time as they followed last weekend's 4-1 rout of Tottenham with a far more tense triumph.

Arsenal travel to Brighton on Wednesday with nine games left in their bid to win a first English title since 2004.

The Gunners, through to the League Cup final, the Champions League last 16 and the FA Cup fifth round, have just one top-flight match left against sides currently in the top six -- a potentially decisive trip to Manchester City on April 18.

Result: Arsenal: 2 (Saliba 21st, Timber 66th) bt Chelsea: 1 (Hincapie 45th+2 own goal).

Sevilla snatch thrilling derby draw vs Betis

SEVILLE, AFP: Sevilla came from two goals down to snatch a thrilling 2-2 derby draw against Real Betis on Sunday in La Liga.

Isaac Romero thumped home from outside the box in the 85th minute to salvage his side a point at Betis's temporary La Cartuja home.

The draw leaves Manuel Pellegrini's Betis fifth, eight points behind Atletico Madrid and Villarreal, in third and fourth respectively, hampering their hopes of Champions League qualification.

Former Manchester United winger Antony sent the hosts ahead in the 16th minute with an acrobatic overhead kick after the ball fell for him in the box.

Midfielder Alvaro Fidalgo tucked home the second before half-time when Ez Abde, who was also involved in the opener, played him in.

Veteran Chile forward Alexis Sanchez pulled one back for Sevilla, 11th minute, after the hour mark with an angled header. It set up an exciting finale and Romero finally got the goal Sevilla craved, drilling home from just outside the box to level.

Abde almost fired Betis back in front but struck the post with three minutes to go and Akor Adams had a shot cleared off the line at the other end.

Result: Real Betis: 2 (Antony 16th, Fidalgo 37th) drew with Sevilla: 2 (Sanchez 62nd, Romero 85th).

Isaac Romero

Everybody wants Sanju to do well: Gavaskar

NEW DELHI, PTI: The iconic Sunil Gavaskar says Sanju Samson is such a "nice guy" that everyone wants him to do well and his clutch knock against the West Indies must have taken the pressure off everyone's shoulders.

Samson broke his sequence of low scores with a match-winning 97-run knock at the big stage in a high-stakes T20 World Cup game against the West Indies in Kolkata on Sunday night.

"This knock of 97 not out takes the weight off not just Sanju Samson's shoulders, but off everyone who knows what a fine player he has been. He has had ups and downs, and we have felt them too because he is such a nice guy. Everybody wants him to do well," said Gavaskar on a Star Sports show.

Samson endured a lean patch in the lead-up to the World Cup, with a string of low scores failing to reflect his true potential.

"All Indian cricket fans will be happy that this sincere cricketer has got the success he deserves."

Sunil Gavaskar

India will now face England in the semi-finals in Mumbai on Thursday.

Gavaskar said a match-winning performance capped with a century would be the icing on the cake for Samson.

"To be the Man of the Match in a must-win game is a dream come true. You could see the emotions on Sanju's face after he hit the winning runs. He was three runs short of a hundred and it would have been fantastic had he reached the three-figure mark."

By delivering in a must-win game, the opener justifies the faith reposed in him

SAMSON'S MOMENT OF REDEMPTION

SIDNEY KIRAN
KOLKATA, DHNS

After a series of bright starts and low scores, Sanju Samson struck a sublime 97 not out against West Indies in a virtual quarterfinal in Kolkata on Sunday. AFP

The talent of Sanju Samson was never in doubt. Right from his age group days in Kerala to his sizzling performances with Rajasthan Royals and some fine displays with the Indian team, it was clearly evident that Samson was cut out for the big league. What bogged him down from reaching his full potential, like the cricketing world witnessed on Sunday, was a lack of consistency that eventually sowed seeds of 'self-doubt' in his own mind.

Let's take the last couple of months, which is a microcosm of Samson's stop-start career, partly due to his fault and partly due to management's strange decisions that could have impacted his performances. After being shuffled up and down the batting order from the Asia Cup last September to accommodate then-designated vice-captain Shubham Gill, Samson, an opener for most of his life, got his place back at the top in the New Zealand series just before the World Cup. Stunningly, Gill was left out of the marquee event while Samson retained his spot in the squad.

Although Gill went out, the surprise inclusion of Ishan Kishan, also an opener, from the wilderness meant Samson still had to earn his right to partner the undisputed Abhishek Sharma. Kishan was coming into the series on the back of a roaring domestic season where he powered Jharkhand to a maiden Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy while Samson was struggling with an identity crisis. Pressure can either make a person or break them. With scores of 10, 6, 0, 24, and 6, and both his technique and temperament exposed ruthlessly by New Zealand fast bowlers, Samson knew he'd be confined to the sidelines again. And that's what happened as Kishan, who scored 215 runs at number three (including a century), partnered Abhishek in the opening game against the US. The 'self-doubt' worsened.

Such was Samson's state of mind that he would even question batting coach Sitanshu Kotak why he's slotted to bat first in the 'nets' sessions when he's not going to be in the playing XI. He even wondered why he was asked to pad up in the first place on match eve. Although he carried out his duties like a thorough professional, it was clearly evident that the baggage of another disappointment was weighing heavily on his mind.

Like how Lady Luck shone on Kishan, it handed a lifeline to Samson. With a southpaw-loaded Indian batting line-up found out by off-spinners, the Indian team was forced to bring back Samson for the Zimbabwe game after the South Africa hammering in the opening Super Eights match to break the monotony. This was going to be the 31-year-old's last shot at glory, failing which there could be no comeback, possibly even losing his place in the team after the World Cup.

This time Samson, who moved from Delhi as a teenager to Thiruvananthapuram to give wings to his cricketing dreams, was determined to conquer the demons. He gave a glimpse of that with a 24-run cameo against Zimbabwe, but he needed something substantial to overcome his own fear. Sunday, at the Eden Gardens against the dangerous West Indies, was the occasion. He smashed a scintillating 97 not out off 50 balls to single-handedly steer India into the semifinals in a record chase.

He banished all those 'self-doubts' in one of the finest innings of his career. He played the high-risk game which has been the hallmark of his batting but, in a welcome change, played the percentages well.

T20 is a game of small margins, and he gambled on the big shots smartly to become the toast of the nation. From being vilified a month ago, he was suddenly the hero. The relief was evident when he smashed the winning run, sinking to his knees and thanking the Almighty for the aleatory.

"It means the whole world to me. Right from the day I started playing, I started dreaming of playing for the country. This is the knock I was waiting for. I had a very special journey. I had a lot of ups and downs. I kept doubting myself, thinking, 'Will I make it?' But I am thankful to the Almighty for blessing me today. I didn't think I would play this special knock, but yeah, this is one of the greatest days of my life," an emotional Samson told the host broadcaster.

Such lifelines don't come often in the middle of a major tournament. Samson has seized it for now. But he needs to build on the gains by showing consistency and climb up and not come hurtling down again.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir gives Sanju Samson a tight hug after the opener scored a match-winning knock against West Indies. PTI

Gambhir hopes Samson builds on his career-defining knock

SIDNEY KIRAN
KOLKATA, DHNS

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Sunday lavished praise on Sanju Samson for finally showing his potential on the biggest stage but exhorted the mercurial wicketkeeper-batter to produce more such match-winning knocks that his talent merits.

Often criticised for his inconsistencies, Samson showed what a dangerous player he is with an unbeaten 97 off 50 balls to help India chase down a competitive target of 196 against the West Indies in a must-win Super Eights game at the Eden Gardens.

"He is a world-class player, we all know how good a player Sanju is," said a delighted Gambhir. "And it was all about backing him. And then when the team needed him the most, obviously today was a day where he probably showed his true potential as well. And hopefully, this is a time for him to kick off and probably two more games to go, hopefully."

While Samson ended up becoming the toast of the country on Sunday, it was not too long ago he was criticised heavily for a poor performance in the five-match series against New Zealand that eventually saw him lose his spot in the playing XI to Ishan Kishan. When asked what the management did to keep him motivated during the period of lull, Gambhir said they gave him time off to rejuvenate.

"We always knew the talent that Sanju had. Three T20 hundreds, not many people have it, so we always knew that obviously he had a tough series against New Zealand, so sometimes it's important to give him a break as well, because you want to get the guy off that pressure situation as well. And we always knew that whenever we need him in the World Cup game, he'll come and deliver it for us.

"And exactly against Zimbabwe he delivered it for us. We got a start that we wanted in the first three overs. And today, again, from where he left against Zimbabwe, he showcased his talent. And this is what we expect from Sanju to do more consistently."

Next up for India in the semifinals at the Wankhede Stadium is England, and Gambhir felt India needed to play the perfect game to stop the Three Lions' unbeaten run. "They're a world-class team, they're a quality team, they've got a lot of quality players as well, and we all know that Wankhede is a tough venue. It's another opportunity to do something special for the team and for the country as well. Hopefully, we play our best game."

Pak may penalise players for WC exit

KARACHI, PTI

Salman Ali Agha

Livid with the Pakistan team's early elimination from the T20 World Cup, the country's cricket board has decided to impose financial penalties on the players for their below-par show, with some sources saying that the amount could be as high as PKR 5 million (Rs 16.40 lakh approx) per member.

The action follows a string of poor results in major tournaments. A reliable source said that appropriate action is being considered by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in the wake of the team's exit from the Super Eight stage of the event co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

"No final decision has been taken on this as yet. But yes it is under consideration to financially penalise the players," he confirmed without revealing the details.

He said it is being debated whether it would be the right step to hit the players financially.

However, other sources in the PCB claimed that the board will impose a fine of PKR 5 million each on the players who returned home on Sunday night following their dismal outing.

Pakistan failed to qualify for the semifinals and lost to big teams like arch-foes India and England while their Super Eight game against New Zealand was washed out.

They beat Sri Lanka in their final Super Eight game but couldn't qualify for the semi-finals.

The performance of the players, according to the source, has not only upset the PCB but also influential figures in the government.

"The feeling is enough is enough and these players despite so much backing let down the nation in big events," the source added.

The players also returned home quietly in small groups.

Kiwis bank on familiarity of India

We don't make things bigger than what they are, says Mitchell on NZ style

KOLKATA, PTI

Having lost to South Africa in group stage, New Zealand batter Daryl Mitchell says his team is excited to meet the Proteas in the semifinals on Wednesday. PTI FILE PHOTO

New Zealand don't make things bigger than they are, said Daryl Mitchell on Monday, adding that the Kiwis will rely on their recent experience of playing in India for the T20 World Cup semifinal.

New Zealand will take on the last edition's runners-up South Africa in the first semifinal to be played at the Eden Gardens here on Wednesday, and Mitchell said the Kiwis have complete clarity over how they want to operate.

"We're pretty clear how we want to operate as Black Caps and that's both on and off the field. We don't make things bigger than what they are, but we're also very excited to be in this position and know how lucky we are to be here in a semifinal," Mitchell told New Zealand Cricket.

"Just looking forward to getting stuck into the contest, trying to win little moments is something that we constantly speak about and hopefully that means we're heading off to a final in a few days' time," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said New Zealand will look to bank on that experience.

"We've spent a bit of time here in India in the last two months and I guess we know what conditions we'll be coming up with," said Mitchell as the Kiwis returned from Sri Lanka after playing a few games in the island nation.

"It'll be different to what we've experienced in the last fortnight in Sri Lanka. But also I think guys will trust the preparation that we've had over the last few months and just looking forward to getting stuck in."

"I would say the Sri Lankan surfaces were a lot slower and a lot lower and got it quite difficult towards the back end of innings."

New Zealand had earlier lost their group stage clash to South Africa by seven wickets.

"They've been one of the best teams in the competition for a reason and they are where they are, so we're really excited to take them on. Even here in Kolkata in the semifinal of the World Cup."

"Both teams are doing everything they can to try and move on to the next stage. For me, it's just going to be really cool to get into a full crowd at Eden Gardens. It's always pretty special," Mitchell added.

Mitchell said being named the Player-of-the-Month for January after his exploits against India in the ODI series, which New Zealand won 2-1 for a historic result, was a team effort.

"It's nice. It's also recognition as a team for the success we've had in the month of January in 2026, (as) the ODI India series (victory) was historic for us as a country having never done that before," Mitchell said.

Showpiece

New Zealand have been in India since the start of the year having played a three-match ODI and a five-match T20I series across various venues in the build-up to the showpiece.

Hope takes blame for Windies' loss

KOLKATA, PTI

Shai Hope

Taking responsibility for the West Indies' elimination from the T20 World Cup, skipper Shai Hope said he should have batted faster at the top to post a more challenging target for India in their must-win Super Eight game here.

Defending champions India chased down a fairly stiff 196-run target to knock the former winners out of the tournament at the Eden Gardens here on Sunday.

The visitors appeared at least 20 runs short as Hope ate up 33 balls for his 32, striking at just over 96, including 17 dot balls that probably cost them heavily in a high-scoring contest.

"Yes, I'll take the blame. I should have batted a lot faster -- if that's what you want me to say," said Hope in the post-match media interaction without dodging any tough question, here on Sunday.

"When you're leading, you want to put your hand up and set the tone at the top. It didn't happen for me today. I just didn't get going today," he conceded.

"But in situations like this, when you're struggling, everyone struggles. But I don't think I was batting badly."

India had the perfect plan to tighten the marauding Windies after Suryakumar Yadav opted to bowl. He went in with Arshdeep Singh, Hardik Pandya and Axar Patel in the powerplay and they did their job, keeping Hope quiet early.

It was then that mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy, held back deliberately for the middle phase, bowled him with a delivery that skidded through to rattle the stumps.

Though opener Roston Chase's acceleration and the late flourish from Rovman Powell and Jason Holder lifted West Indies to 195/4, the total felt under-par on a good Eden surface with dew aiding the chase.

Gukesh's blunders hand Abdusattorov the win, 3rd loss for Aravindh

PRAGUE, PTI

The fortunes of World Champion D Gukesh did not change for the fifth day running as the Indian blundered from a position of strength to lose to nemesis Nodirbek Abdusattorov at Prague International Chess Festival here.

Just a month back Gukesh had lost to Abdusattorov through a blunder from a decent position during the Tata Steel Masters but the fifth round here was even more heartbreaking as the Indian did everything right for the major part of the middle game and seemed like cruising through to an easy victory.

Employing a new strategy as black, Gukesh tormented the white's king early in the opening and created enough weaknesses for the computer to volunteer that he was closing in on his first victory in Masters section of the tournament.

However, the ticking of the clock had its final say as the Indian faltered in the closing stages of the first time-control.

Abdusattorov almost returned the favour but this was simply not Gukesh's day as another blunder saw white advancing his pawn to glory.

D Gukesh

If Nodirbek was lucky, there seems no stopping the Dutch Grandmaster Jorden van Foreest who climbed to number in 11 in world ranking in live ratings following his fourth victory in five games.

On the receiving end was Hans Moke Niemann of United States who made a single error that cast the dye decisively in Foreest favour.

The day produced all decisive games in the 10-player round-robin tournament and defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram succumbed to his third defeat in five games, giving David Anton Guijarro of Spain something to rejoice before the lone rest day.

With Foreest on four points, Abdusattorov and Navara are close on his heels a half point behind. Guijarro is the lone occupant on the fourth spot on 3 points.

Gukesh, Aravindh and Niemann occupy the last three spots on just 1.5 points.

Results round 4: David Navara (Cze, 3.5) bt Nodirbek Yakubboaev (Uzb, 2); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 4) bt Hans Moke Niemann (Usa, 1.5): Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 3.5) bt D Gukesh (Ind, 1.5); Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 1.5) It to David Anton Guijarro (Esp, 3); Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 2.5) bt Vincent Keymer (Ger, 2).

Challengers: Jiner Zhu (Chn, 1.5) drew with Benjamin Gledura (Hun, 2); Joans Buhl Bjerre (Den, 2.5) drew with Jachym Nemec (Cze, 3); Thomas Beerdsen (Ned, 3) drew with Stepn Hrbek (Cze, 3); Surya Shekhar Ganguly (Ind, 1) It to Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 2.5); Finek Vanclav (Cze, 4) bt Daniil Yuffa (Esp, 1.5).

Iran's FIFA WC spot in doubt; Iraq, UAE are stand bys

GENEVA, AP: Iran's place at the men's World Cup in three months' time was put in doubt Monday amid an escalating Middle East conflict sparked by the football tournament's co-host the United States.

Iran are due to play their three group stage games in the USA—two in Inglewood, California, then in Seattle—from June 15-26. Cities in Canada and Mexico also will host some of the 104 games.

The US and Israel have targetted Iran in coordinated attacks since Saturday that killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and dozens more senior officials.

It provoked an Iranian response that aimed missiles at US allies including 2022 World Cup host Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which FIFA has picked to stage the 2034 edition.

"What is certain is that after this attack, we cannot be expected to look forward to the World Cup with hope," said Iran's top football official Mehdi Taj, a vice president of the Asian Football Confederation.

It is unclear if the state-backed Iranian football federation could refuse to sendits team to the 48-nation tournament that starts June 11, or the US government could effectively block the team.

Iran were a fast World Cup qualifier last March, earning one of eight guaranteed places allocated to the Asian Football Confederation.

Should Iran pull out, the likely replacement from Asia should be Iraq or the UAE.

FIFA has declined comment since Saturday, when secretary general Mattias Grafstrom said it would "monitor developments."

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